

The Lay of the Wraith

AND OTHER POEMS

BY I. N. PHIPPS



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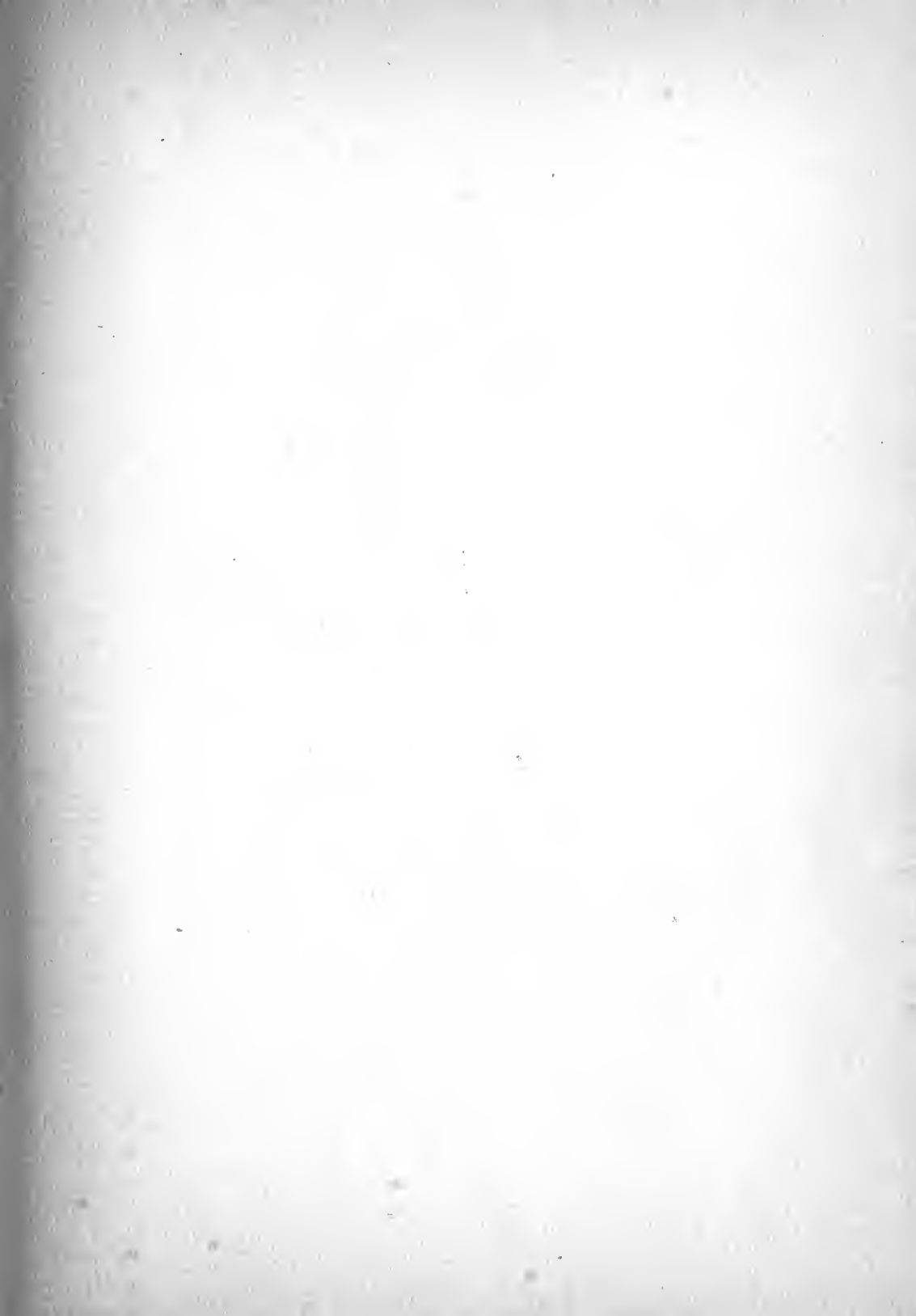
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









“On a downy couch of sable,
Fainting, lay lost Anton-Lar-ree,
While beside her, now no longer
Counterfeiting her own Moscharr,
Crouched the hideous Manito.”

Page 180.

THE LAY OF THE WRAITH

AND OTHER POEMS.

✓
BY I. N. PHIPPS

Illustrated by the Author

LOUISVILLE:
JOHN P. MORTON & COMPANY
1895

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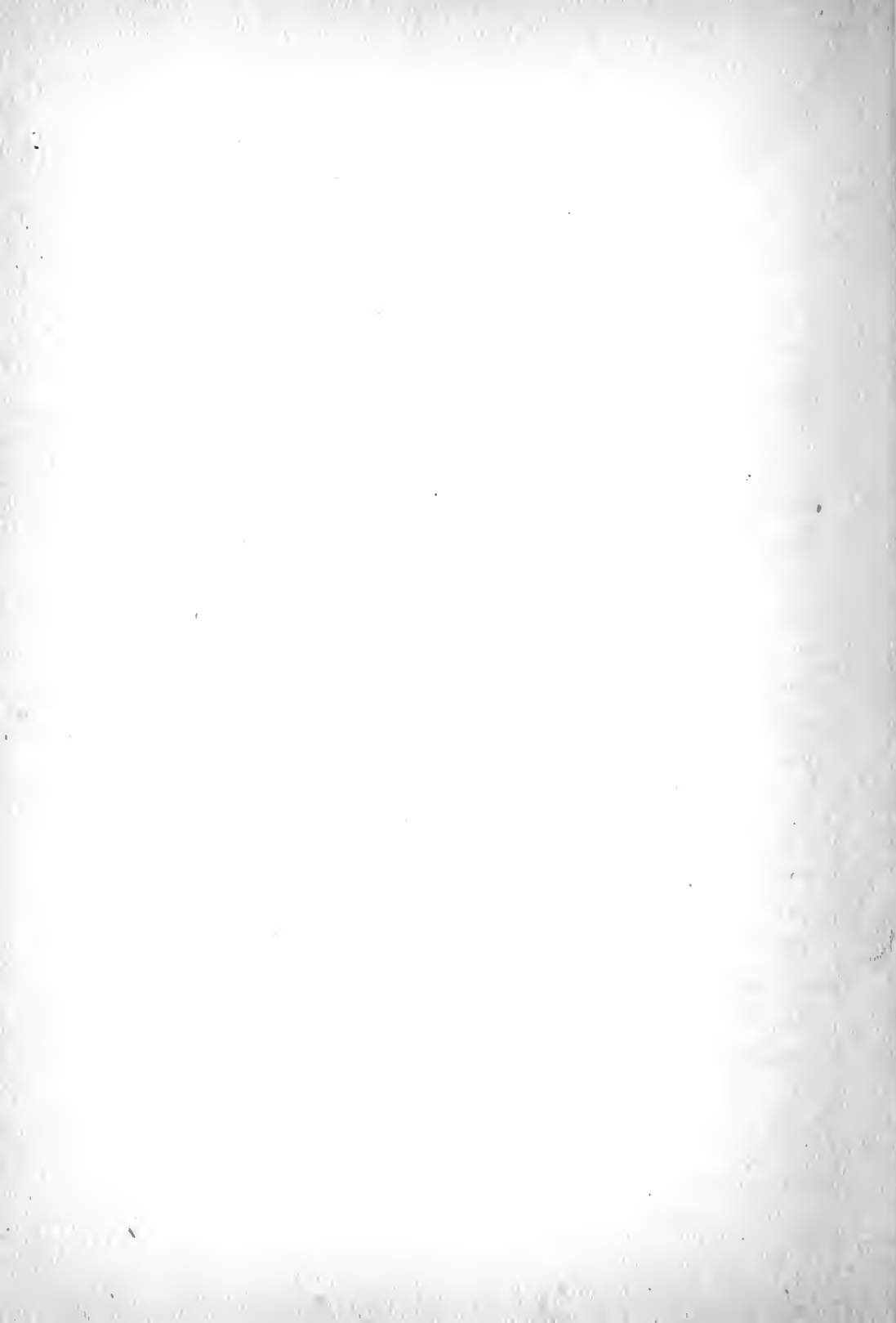


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1895

TO ONE
WHO WAS FAITHFUL AND TRUE IN ALL THE RELATIONS OF
Wife and Mother,
AND TO THOSE SHE LEFT ME TO CARE FOR AND LOVE,
THIS VOLUME
IS TENDERLY INSCRIBED.



PREFACE.

IF, by having wandered, in company with a wraith, through the ghost-realms of the mystic past, I may be enabled thereby to find a half hundred or so appreciative listeners to the songs with which she beguiled me, and which I am now about to send forth to a somewhat fickle, but, withal, critical public, I shall feel myself fully compensated for the time given to her company, listening to her songs of those stirring times and wild romances, of which, in the flesh, she was an active participant, or an interested spectator. More especially should I consider myself repaid if it should be the means of projecting a little farther into the future an echo or two of those fast-receding, rapidly-expiring songs of the wilderness in those remote times, before it had come to be the New World, and of which we have no record save that of a legendary or mythical character, transmitted orally to the pioneers of the New World, and by them recorded for the edification of succeeding generations.

And yet, to me, life in the wilderness in those far-away times, with its loves and its hatreds; with its friendships and its rivalries; with its fidelities and its treacheries; with its compassions and its cruelties, and with its harmonies and dissensions, as set forth in these legends, is as real and authentic as if attested to and dripping fresh from the pen of a Gibbon, a Macaulay, or our own Bancroft; for every fireside had its historian and story-teller, whose duty it was to keep alive the traditions of the tribe, which he did, by inscribing them, metaphorically speaking, upon the "green leaves of memory" of the rising generation.

And the themes of these traditions were as many as the passions of the human heart, and stirring love romances were by no means an infrequent or unappreciated theme around the evening camp-fire of the wilderness, for in the heart of the savage love is as potent and unrestrained as in that of the civilized and cultured. How could it be otherwise when it is coeval therein with hate and revenge, the lesser two of the heart's triumvirate?

Hence, I believe that every legend that has come down to us had its beginning in some fact or reality,

notwithstanding that, before they had descended through the successive cycles of time to that of our own, they had become so stuffed with the fabulous and swathed in myth as to be wholly unrecognizable. Nor is this any wonder, when we remember the superstition and credulity of man in his crude or savage state.

Nor do I think there is any excess of sentiment or emotion in any single line or passage devoted to love scenes, declarations and protestations of attachment and devotion between my wild, untutored lovers of the wilderness. On the contrary, I feel, from all that I can glean of their characteristics, that I have failed to do justice to the depth of their love and the strength of their fidelity.

Of the shorter poems I shall have but little to say. They are the simple songs and echoes of the heart, most of them, perhaps, of a too emotional, sentimental, or morbidly-melancholy vein to meet the sanction of the reader of the modern magazine poetry (?), whose tendency is toward the less sentimental and more restrained and laboriously weighty verse found in the magazines of the day, and which is conspicuous for the absence of the inspiration of

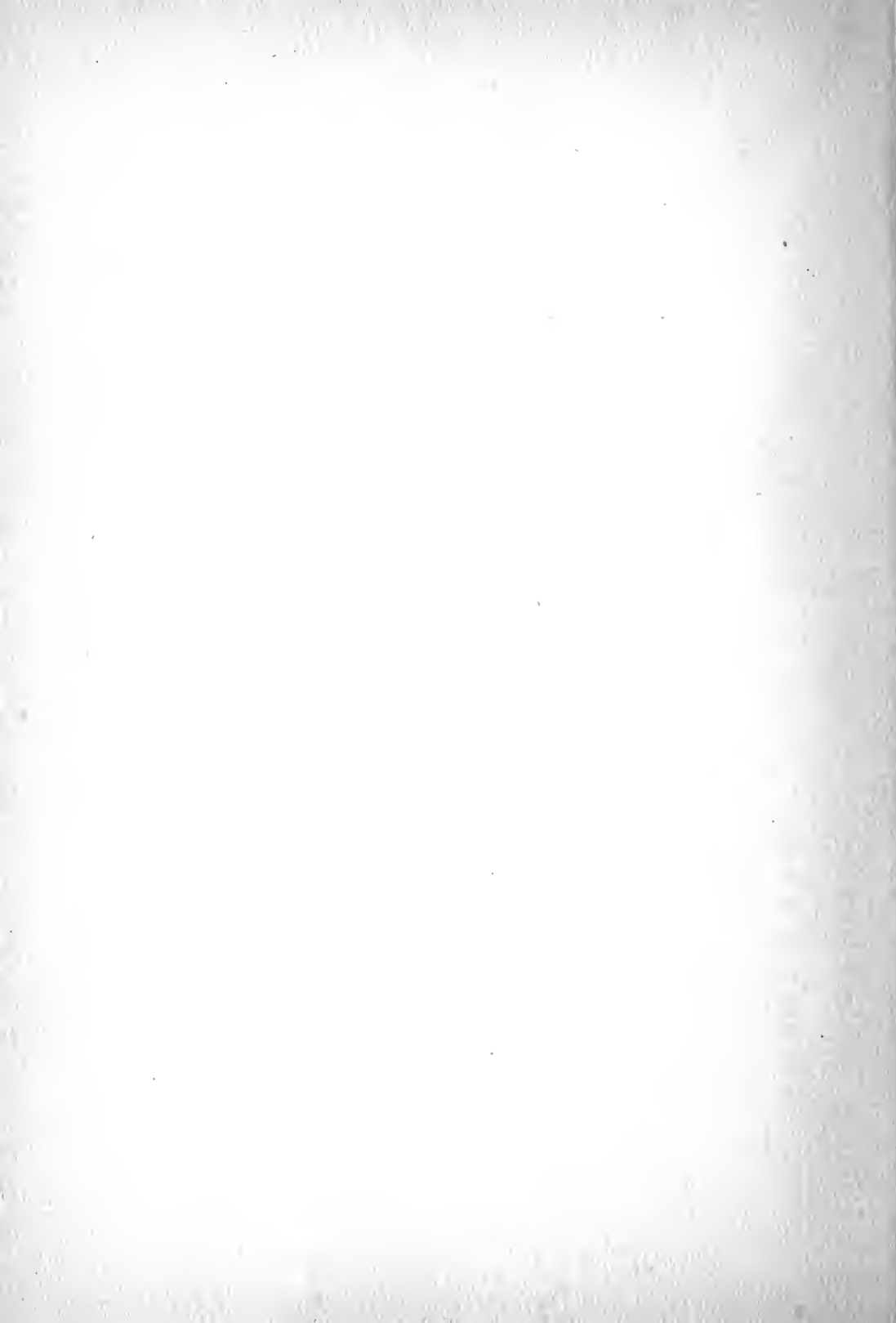
the Muse, and the substitution of some kind of a clumsy, mechanical vehicle for Pegasus. The simple, emotional heart-songs of the Muse are almost wholly excluded from the modern magazine, the preference going to the more weighty affectations of the modern school they themselves have founded.

For my part, I hold that there is no poetry which does not draw its inspiration from the heart. That only is poetry which is endowed with the subtilty to find and touch a responsive chord in the heart of those to whom its melody comes. Yea, what is poetry but a vehicle for reflecting and parading the emotions and sentiments of the heart, and the more beautiful in nature mirrored there?

But I have been wandering. What I had started to say was, that these shorter poems are simple echoes of the heart, and as such are submitted to an indulgent or critical public, as the case may be, but with no expectation that they will find an extensive reading or appreciation beyond the circle of my immediate friends and acquaintances. Yet I may, perhaps, be pardoned if I should entertain a faint hope that some one or more of them may touch a responsive chord in the heart of some similarly constituted as myself,

and be the means of interpreting some of those imprisoned but unexpressed thoughts and melodies of their own hearts; for I believe that every human heart imprisons one or more melodies, striving there for utterance and freedom, and that sometimes a stray line or verse, emanating from some other heart, is the key for their liberation. That is all.

I. N. P.



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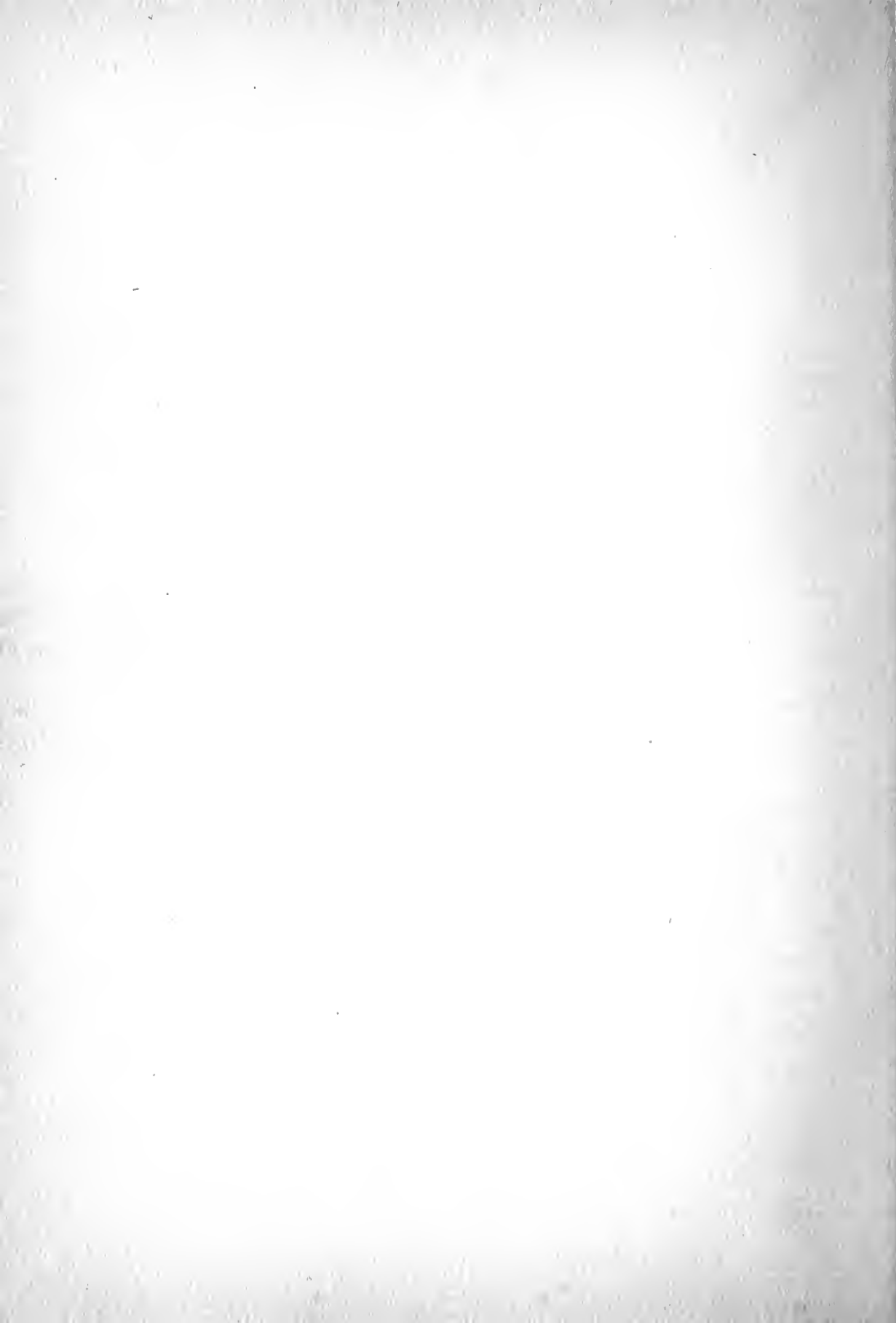
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THE LAY OF THE WRAITH.

PROLOGUE.

BEYOND the faintest, farthest reaching ray,
Historic or traditionary—

So long ago, Fancy grows weary
Traveling back across the dreary
Lapse of time to that mixed clime,
Whence all legitimate inquiry
In lethean darkness gropes its way—
Upon a time imaginary
Begins and ends our simple lay.

CANADIAN WINTERS.

Ye have heard of the land whose hoarse-breathing pine
Never felt the embrace of the soft tropic vine ;
Whose far-reaching winters and frost-laden breeze
Lock the germ in the earth and the bud on the trees ;

Whose storm-freighted cloud, rushing forth in his wrath,
Strews with wreckage and ruin the course of his path;
Whose ice-sheeted streams and snow-cinctured hills
Hold the hunter at bay till he dies of his ills.
It was here in this land dwelt the maid of our dreams,
But the winter had fled and the erst bounden streams
Gave back the soft glow of a warm summer sky,
And the form of the eagle that circled on high,
When she in her beauty appears on the scene
To meet her Annawan in laurel copse green.

THE WRAITH'S WARNING.

O hark you, fair maiden, and heed it,
The Wraith she will sing you a song,
Which if you will heed, maid, indeed it
May save you a sorrow life-long.

From a land that is far hence I sprung,
I lived in the time of earth's prime;
To the maids of all ages I've sung,
And the fair ones of every clime.

My song is a warning, and weighted
With caution each maiden should know;
With sorrow sometimes it is freighted,
But sorrow that mitigates woe.

Look where you will you will never
Find heart without ever a grief;
'T is a birthright that clings to man ever,
And of his emotions 't is chief.

As the bud on the twig is dependent,
So the twig on the bough it depends,
And the bough for its vigor transcendent
On the sap through the trunk that ascends.

Think you that the heart's less reliant?
Nay, maiden, the heart you will find
Is a thing that is erring and pliant,
And to error is mostly inclined.

And, maid, if the heart should be wanting
In obedience's sweet sustenance,
The error will ever be taunting
That heart as life's footsteps advance.

So, maiden, if thou wouldst be pleased,
Think well of the step thou wouldst take,
For each step in life's way is measured,
And sorrow treads close in its wake.

FIRST CANTO.

THE Moon of Buds* had come and gone,
The Moon of Flowers,† too, had flown,
And now the Moon of Young Corn‡ shone,
And in their garniture of green
The forest-cinctured hills are seen,
Closely embowering a stream,
Whose waters in the sunlight gleam
Like molten silver, as they flow
To their embouchure far below.

Just where a huge rampart of cliffs
(Whose time-worn front showed yawning rifts)
Reared high its weather-beaten crest,
The winding stream curved to the west,—
While just beyond a spur of land
Sloped gently to the river's strand.
Above, on either side, a bar
Of golden sand extended far—
Deep skirting which were forests dense—
Dark forests of boundless expanse,

* April. † May. ‡ June.

Whose foliage green, of varying hue,
With shafts of sunlight piercing through,
Checked the ground and, mingling, played
Like fairies in a moonlit glade.

'T was here in this embowered wood,
Near by the stream, a maiden stood,
Whose restless mien and furtive glance
Told that she was not there by chance.
Quick seemed her senses, like the deer,
When it is listening, half in fear,
And trained her ear to every sound
That woke the solitude profound.
Expectancy shone on her face
Till shades of doubt usurped its place;
But when a sound she seemed to hear,
As of a canoe drawing near,
Though seeming half inclined to fly,
A light ecstatic filled her eye,
And cheek and brow grew all a-flame,
As full in view the canoe came,
Revealing to her raptured gaze
The young chief of the Ojibways.
Yet maiden modesty forbade

That he should see the tell-tale blush,
Wherefore she sought a deeper shade
Till she had lost the gladsome flush.
And when the canoe touched the strand,
Annawan leaped upon the land,
And hastened to the trysting place,
Anxious to clasp in fond embrace
Whom he expected there to find;
Meanwhile Opeechee, hid 'n behind
A clump of laurels, peering out,
Marked his questioning look of doubt;
Laughed softly when she saw he spied
Her footprints, and with hasty stride
Sought the copse where she concealed
Her presence from his longing eyes;
Whereon, yet still her form to shield,
'Round and around the bush she hies—
In vain! he turned, and ere she knew,
Forth full into his arms she flew!

O Love! which is and was the same
In every land, in every time,
Kindling alike the mystic flame
In every heart, in every clime;

Enravishing the savage soul
Not less than his of finer mold;
Eternal as the breath of life—
The golden link 'twixt man and wife—
Since thou herein must play a part,
We hail thee, Love, with gladsome heart.

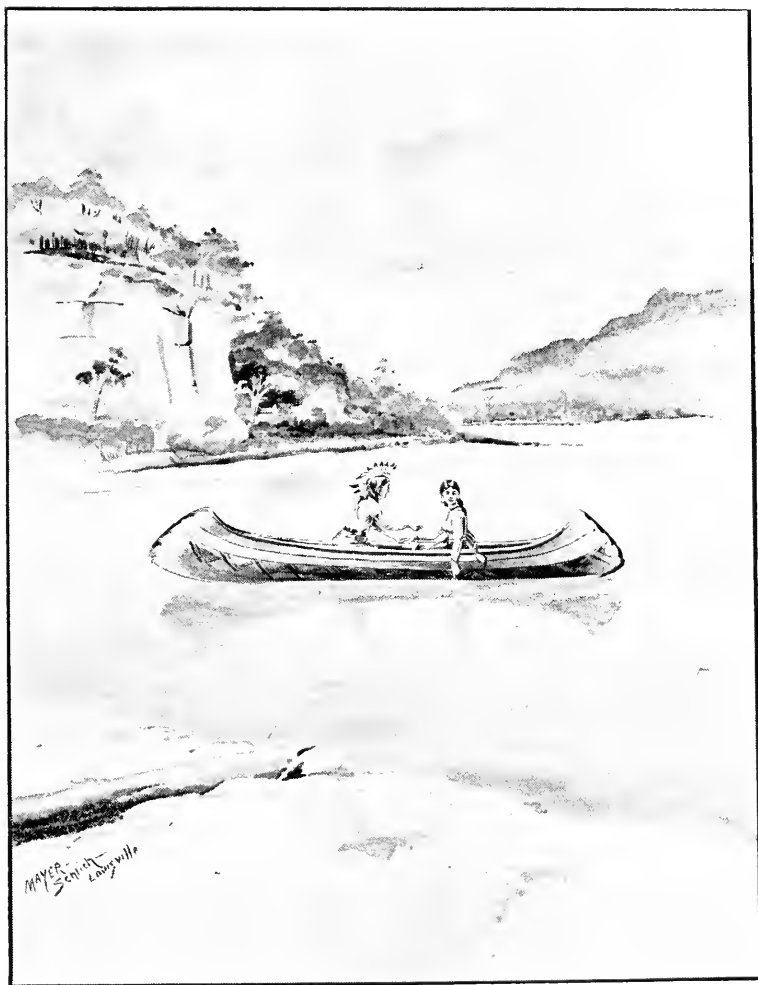
And did she shrink from his embrace?
And did she seek to hide her face,
So that his kisses might not fall
Upon her willing lips at all?
Ask not whose heart is in accord
With love so pure and chaste as theirs;
Enough to know nor act or word
Differed from the like love affairs.

Demurely now Opeechee stands,
Annawan holding fast her hands;
Her cheeks, late from his fond caress,
Are tinged with love and happiness.
And now that greetings all are o'er,
They slowly wend toward the shore,
And soon are seated in his boat,
And out upon the waters float.
With easy grace he plies the oars,

And when midway between the shores
He rests the paddles on the beam,
And lets the boat drift with the stream.

And drifting thus, they drift so slow
Ye know not if they come or go;
So still the river is, and clear,
Ye know not if its waters flow,
Or if the boat is poiséd there;
Not till they drift so near the strand,
She plucks a pebble from the sand,
And lifting high her shapely hand
She tosses it far in the stream,
And where it falls they see the gleam
Of fishes flashing 'round it.

And now their canoe gently drifts
Beneath those gray, gigantic cliffs,
Which rise sheer from the river's shore,
Where flowers, growing in the rifts
Of the gray rocks, in lavish store,
Are mirrored in the placid stream,
Until the ripples from the oar,
All shimmering 'twixt brink and beam,
Mingle the fair reflection.



“And drifting thus, they drift so slow
Ye know not if they come or go.”

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They talk in that low, earnest strain,
Which is love's wont, when it in vain
Parental sanction 's sought to win,—
(For it so happened there had been
A feud between their sires)
And earnestly the youth essayed,
As oft aforetime, to persuade
The maid to fly with him;
She sadly shook her head and sighed,
As tenderly she thus replied:
“Reckwa, my sire, would sooner die,
Yea, by thy father's hand, or by
Annawan's hand, sooner than I
Should be Annawan's bride.
And though we'd many moons the start,
And each the courage of his heart,
And though our feet were doubly swift,
And we had eagle's wings to lift
Us over lake and river,
I should not dare to go with thee,
I should not dare my sire to flee,
Since well I know that he would seek
Us in the utmost parts to wreak
Dire vengeance on Annawan.

“Fain would I be Annawan’s bride,
Fain would I linger by his side,
Fain would I with Annawan go,
Fain would I share his weal and woe;
Only so well, dear one, I know
A death should pay the forfeit.

“And were Opeechee, dear, thy wife,
And were the forfeit thy dear life,
Or should Annawan’s hand prevail
Against my sire, should he assail
Annawan in his den,
Then would the light go from mine eyes;
Then would my heart go out in sighs;
Then would my cheek grow wan and pale,
As, borne to me on every gale,
I’d hear the sound of a death wail—
Annawan’s or my sire’s.

“Forego thy suit, and be content
To know that love our souls hath blent,
And to our lives a glamour lent,
So that we see not with our eyes
While rev’ling in love’s ecstasies.
And though ’t were sweet to have thee near,

For that thy life is doubly dear,
I would not jeopardize it."

"Opeechee, O most lovely maid!"
'T was thus the youth began, and said:
"Hope of my heart! light of my soul!
'T is written on yon azure scroll;
'T is stamped in letters broad and high
In yonder heaven-tinted sky—
'Opeechee is Annawan's bride!"

"Must love by factious feuds be tied,
Or warring sires our fate decide?
Away the thought! the world is wide,
And we may find a safe abode,
Where hate and strife may not corrode
The gentler feelings of the soul—
Where, fancy free and conscience whole,
We dream of love's elysian.

"Far to the south are fruitful lands,
Inhabited by peaceful bands;
Ambrosial fruits bestrew the ground,
Hang pendent from the trees around—
Where herds of fallow deer abound,

And game of every kind is found
To tempt the hunter's bow.
It is a land for love like ours—
A sunny land, whose sylvan bowers
Exhale the perfume of rare flowers,
And there secure may we abide,
If thou 'lt consent to be my bride.

“The moon is old,* the sky is clear,
And soft and balmy is the air;
Opeechee, say, wilt thou not share
A lodge with me in that fair clime?
This is the chance, now is the time,
And see! the daylight wanes!

“Without thy love his hand would lose
Its cunning, and his feet refuse
To bear Annawan in the chase;
Without thy hand his lodge to grace,
Annawan's life were vain.
Beyond this stretch of plastic strand
There is a place where we may land,
And leave no footprints in the sand
To guide thy wary father's eye.

* Full moon.

Quick, love! decide, and let us fly!
I have my tomahawk and bow—
I have my scalping-knife, and lo!
A quiver filled with arrows good,
And in my muskeemoot* is food
To last us many a day."

Thus he pleaded, thus adjured her,
Thus from fear he reassured her,—
Thus beguiling, thus assuring,
Thus her yearning heart alluring,
Annawan gained his cause.

With sturdy hand he plies the oar,
Until the prow grates on the shore,
When, stepping lightly to the land,
He takes Opeechee by the hand,
And lifts her from the boat;
Whereon he, by a skillful move,
The canoe from its moorings drove;
He saw it plow the distant shore,
Rebound and drift stern end before,
And anchor on a limb.

* A kind of pouch made of deer or bear skin, in which they carried provisions when out on expeditions.

Turning, he takes Opeechee's hand,
Who now for fright can scarcely stand,
And, whisp'ring words of love and hope,
He gently leads her up the slope.
Lightly they step from stone to stone,
And, careful to displace no one,
It must have been an eagle eye
That could or mark or sign descry,
And follow on their trail.

And now upon the mountain crest
They pause, and, turning to the west,
The maiden thus bewails her woe,
While gazing on the scene below,
Where she beholds all darkly dim,
Piercing the twilight's thick'ning film,
A wreath of smoke ascending where
Her father's lodge lies by the mere :
"Reckwa! my sire, thy child is gone!
Opeechee from thy lodge hath flown!
Who now thy lonely life will cheer?
Who now thy haunch of moose prepare?
Who now thy ev'ning fire will lay?
Who drive thy heavy thoughts away?

Who meet thee at thy wigwam door
At twilight when the chase is o'er,
To welcome thee with fond caress—
Or who thy wayward daughter bless?

“O Manitou! in mercy 'tend
The footsteps of my childhood's friend!
Give him the blessings she denies
Who disobedient from him flies;
And when the twilight shadows creep
About his lonely lodge, as now,
Give him kind thoughts of me, and keep
The low'ring storm-cloud from his brow,
Nor let his vengeance follow.

“O father! father! I would give
Full half the days I have to live
If I had had thy blessing ere
I left thy lodge beside yon mere,—
Thy benediction and thy prayers
Had banished these foreboding cares
And lighted all my future.
Yet where I go thy face benign
Will follow me, and mem'ry twine
Her tendrils round this aching heart,

Wherein thou hast a father's part ;
For that I love Annawan more
Takes nothing from the filial store—
Nothing but obedience.

“And thou, dear native hills and streams,
Farewell until we meet in dreams !
And thou, dear lodge, dear lake, farewell !
Father, Opeechee loves thee well !
Then bless thy child, O father, bless !
Nor love thy wayward daughter less
That she hath left thee lonely.”

'T was thus she spoke and bowed her head,
And thence from the dear scene was led.
Before them stretched the forest wild ;
Around them swept the breezes mild ;
Before them lay the summer night ;
Beneath their feet the mellow light
Of the full moon, new risen.

O maid, thy feet are powerless
To traverse yon vast wilderness ;
Too weak thy heart, too frail thy form,
To breast the coming conflict's storm ;

To such belongs love's ministry,
And the light parts of minstrelsy—
Forsooth, not war's alarms.

Attuned to love, my harp would fain
Prolong awhile the tender strain,
Nor rasp the ear with sounds of strife,
The clash of arms and ebbing life;
Alas! not mine to make the choice;
Imperative the Muse's voice;
Perforce a dif'rent harp I take,
And chords of other import wake;
From themes of love to war's alarms
Now turns the Muse, and bids to arms
In tones imperative.

SECOND WARNING OF THE WRAITH.

O, hear ye the song of the sad we-ko-lis?*

'T is an omen of ill on occasion like this;

There are tears in its notes, for it weeps as it sings,

And beats its sad breast with its dew-drabbled wings.

'T is a voice prophetic, whose warnings fall fast

On a soul that is burdened with scenes of the past;

Soft flutter its wings, and its tremulous strain

Forbids ye return to the war-path again.

'T is the cry of a warrior, who sleeps with the slain;

O say, Chippewas, is the warning in vain?

It ceases, and through the dim forest it flies,

And the last pulsing strain on the mountain side dies.

*The whippowil, in whose quavering, tremulous notes they always read some portent or other.

SECOND CANTO.

FAIR is the night; a balmy breeze,
Low whisp'ring, plays among the trees.
But O, how sad the sounds, and drear,
Which fall upon the list'ning ear!
To whom hath stood at night alone
In some vast wilderness is known
The dreary cry of beast and bird,
Which in such lonely place is heard.
The panther's scream, the moaning owl,
The night-hawk's shriek, the gray wolf's howl;
The catamount's deep, dismal squall,
The sound of some huge fragment's fall;
The wail of some poor captive hare
The dun fox bears toward his lair,—
Drear sounds are these, but drearer still
The plaint of the lone whippowil,
Whose swaying, pulsing, quav'ring strain,
Vibrating, sweeps both hill and plain,
And fills the heart with gloom.

Behold a lonely lodge, a lake ;
A canoe moored beneath a brake ;
A woodbound lodge, wherein no light
Dispels the shadows of the night ;
A restful lake, where no wild waves
The sand upon its margin laves,
But whose broad bosom, shimmering, gleams
Beneath the moon's refulgent beams ;
A silent lake, but for the plash
Of yonder oars, which lightly dash
The waters from the canoe's sides,
As thitherward it swiftly glides
Toward the distant shore.

But whose that eagle-crested form,
Whose the sturdy, sinewy arm
That plies the oar and speeds the bark,
Whose flaming eye and visage dark
Betoken purpose dread and dire?
'Tis Reckwa, fair Opeechee's sire,
Who goes to light the signal fire
On yonder mountain crest.

Who once beholds and marks the grace
Of yonder form and swarthy face,

Now in his purpose firmly set,
Will neither form or face forget.
His cheeks bear marks of Time's rude hands,
His hairs are streaked with silver strands,
Yet lithe his form and so erect
That ye would scarce his age suspect.
So keen his eye, that when its glance
Falls on thee by design or chance,
Ye feel it pierce and search thy soul,
Or sear thy heart like living coal,
Till ye or quake or blanch.

And now the signal fire's ablaze,
And quickly comes from weary ways
The answering whoop of warriors bold
Across the dreary moonlit wold.
Like "Alps on Alps" the rocks uprear
Their heads above the mountain, where
Red tongues of flame grotesquely twine
Around the fire-scathed, blasted pine,
While wreaths of darkling smoke ascend,
And with the floating night mists blend,
And drift in shadows over.

And other eyes, than whose were sought,
Glimpses of the dread signal caught,
Yea, other eyes, the eyes of whom
It meant pursuit, and maybe doom ;
Yet who nor blanched or waver'd when
He paused to view it from the glen,
But grasped his weapons firmer.
Not so the maid, who trembling hung
Upon Annawan's arm, or wrung
Her hands in sore distress.

Though hills and valleys lay between,
Opeechee's sire is dimly seen
Outlined against the lurid blaze,
Encircled by a fumid haze.
Forward and fro across the stone,
Whence rose the flame, he strode alone,
Pausing as if to heed, anon,
The answer to his signal fire,
Which crackled as it mounted higher,
While spectral shadows danced above
Where the mad flames in masses drove
The lurid-cinctured smoke athwart
The blasted pines, which gray or swart
Shone in the fitful glare.

On through the dim, moon-checked wood,
Onward and on, in silent mood,
Through many a gruesome glade and glen,
And marshy glebe, and noisome fen,
Scarce conscious of the haste they made,
Annawan and Opeechee strayed,
Nor paused again to look behind,
Where Reckwa, still dimly outlined,
Was turning slowly from the place,
His lonely footsteps to retrace,
To meet his braves, who'll soon appear
Upon the green beside the mere.
And thus, as he descends the hill,
He muses on his recent ill:

“Rather than she should live, his wife,
Her father's hand would quench her life;
Rather than blood of mine should course
With my life's foes from the same source,
I'd quench the fountain that supplied
The vital fluid to the tide,
And smile to feel the heartbeats stop,
As curdled the last ebbing drop.

“Nothing but blood will ever cool
The burning anger of my soul;

Naught but Ojibway scalps alone
For this blight on my heart atone.
The enmity our fathers first
Fanned into flame, their sons have nursed,
As many battles won and lost,
On either side, show, and the cost.
But when they sued for peace, we smoked
The calumet, and then invoked
The Master's aid to bury deep
The tomahawk, and ever keep
The hunters all within the bounds
Of their respective hunting-grounds.
The Chippewas have faithf'ly kept
The pledge, and never yet have stepp'd
A foot upon Ojibway soil,
Lest it should re-awake the broil
And brew a deadly strife."

Thus murm'ring, he approached the lake,
And, gliding through the tangled brake,
Soon his light birchen barque is seen
Fast speeding tow'rd the other strand,
Where, gathered on the rolling green,
The river and the lake between,

He spies a number of his band
Awaiting his return.

No time was lost in courtesies;
Reckwa, advancing to the ring,
Struck the post* and began to sing,
And thus he chants his grievances:
"Brave Chippewas! yon blasted pine
So typifies this life of mine,
'T were hard to pass the lonely tree
And not observe the simile;
Blasted the pine, and sable swathed,
Blasted my heart, and sorrow scathed,
Dead Reckwa's every hope but one—
The sweet hope of revenge!
Pine-like, bereft of branch and cone,
Reckwa stands here to-night alone!
Alone, no kith or kin to share
His lonely lodge and simple fare;
No solace now hath Reckwa;
(Yet know ye, now, his heart rejects

*Striking the post signified that the one doing so had a grievance to avenge and desired followers, and all who did likewise signified their willingness to join him in his quest of revenge or the redress of his wrongs.

The sympathy his eye detects ;
That tendered him in pity's name
But adds to sorrow bitter shame,—
A warrior's grief's his own.)

“Whom death had left me of my line,
A foeman came, and, by design,
Around her heart spell-meshes wove
From the soft eloquence of love,
Until my child, ensnared,
Obeyed the impulse of desire,
Forsook her lodge and aged sire,
To be a foul Ojibway's wife,
The son of one whom years of strife
Made Reckwa's bitter foe for life ;
Wherefore my hate, unleashed,
Will follow, nor forego the chase,
Till he and his accursed race,
Till he and his marauding band
Have felt the vengeance of that hand
From which he pluck'd the only flower
Left there to grace my lonely bower—
My forest rose is gone!

“Yea, know whom our forbearance spared,
This very day hath even dared
To strike a blow at Reckwa’s heart!
Ha! was ’t fancy, or did ye start
And grasp your tomahawks?
Full many moons thy bows, unstrung,
In thy wigwams have idle hung,
Thy scalping-knives insheathed;
But now the time, and soon the hour,
When they shall wield their wonted pow’r;
When yonder moon, eclipsed, shall pause,
Obedient to Nature’s laws,
And the great orb, now hid’n from view,
His daily circuit shall renew,
Then yonder mountain we shall scale
Upon the foul Ojibway’s trail,
My vengeance to appease.
Ho! now, good priest, thy rites begin,
And seek the Spirit’s will to win!”*

* It was customary to have their priests consult the Great Spirit before an expedition of this kind, and try to secure His sanction. Failing in securing His sanction, the Evil Spirit was sought.

Up springs the priest, before whose eye
Three generations have gone by ;
And, though the scourging thongs of time
Have left their impress on his face,
His form 's erect, his mien sublime,
His bearing marked with native grace.
Like some gigantic forest oak
Which, of the forest by its side,
Alone escaped Time's ruthless stroke,
So he 'd survived where others died.
He 'd seen his generation fade,
Another and another laid
Beside it in the forest shade,
Till he alone remained.

His robe of bear and beaver skins
He casts aside ere he begins :
The spoils of the otter cased
His loins to below his waist ;
And, thus attired, the goodly man
His mystic rites and chants began.

THE PRIEST'S SONG.

“The fire we have made
And the deer we have slayed,
And the skin and the horn
From the carcass we've torn,
And the flesh we have laid
On the coals, and bade
Its sweetness ascend
To our fathers' friend—
To the Master of Life,
Who leadeth in strife,
Whose voice we hear
When the storm cloud is near,
Whose terrible eyes
With the lightning vies—
To Him this sacrifice!

“Great Spirit! we pray
Thou'lt hear us and say
If we shall pursue
The Ojibway thief
While the morning dew
Is fresh on the leaf,

Or shall we delay
Till the wane of the day?
Spirit! Good Spirit! answer, we pray.

"Listen," he said, pausing to hear
Whether the Spirit would answer make.
Each hideous form inclined an ear,
But seemingly no Spirit spake,
For soon they lock their hands again,
Resuming song and dance amain:

"He sleeps! He sleeps!
Or the Evil One keeps
Our song from His ears;
Or maybe he hears,
But, weary, He cares
Not to answer our prayers.
Come, Spirit! awake!
Nor longer delay!
Is the offering we make
Sufficient, or nay?"

"Hush!" said the powwow, bending near,
Where sizzling lay the burning deer.
"I hear the Turkey Cock's* loud crow!"

*Thunder, thought to be the voice of God.

“What says it?” queried Reckwa, low.

“The Spirit says ye may not go
To war, nor yet pursue the foe ;
‘Forbear thy vengeance, and renew
The pipe of peace,’ thus, saith He, do.”

Then Reckwa, lifting high his head,
Looked fiercely at the priest and said :
“Reckwa fears the Great Spirit, Priest,
And never yet in thought the least,
Much less by open word or deed,
Refused that Spirit’s will to heed.
Yet Reckwa now will even dare,
Since the Great Spirit refused his prayer,
To seek The Voice* in yonder cave,
Which never yet refused a brave
The pittance of revenge.”
Then, going to the post alone,
He sang in a wild monotone :

“Shall Reckwa’s hate expire?
Must Reckwa sheathe his ire?
And shall the war dance cease—

*Any hill, precipice, or cave that gave back an echo was thought to be the dwelling place of a spirit, especially an evil spirit.

THE LAY OF THE WRAITH.

His foe depart in peace?
The sacrifice go out,
And wake no vengeful shout?
The 'curs'd Ojibway go?
The Wizard One shall show!

"Hence to his cave I'll fly,
Forthwith to him apply,
Invoke his aid and help,
Burn there the she wolf's whelp,
And pois'nous rattlesnake
Likewise will I take;
The tortoise and the lizard,
By the red-handed wizard,
Reckwa will burn to him.

"And the sav'ry scent of these
The Voice will appease,
And he will bid me go
And slay the treach'rous foe;
Bid me seek revenge, ho! ho!
What as revenge so sweet?
Not even the cub-bear's meat!
Its sweetness far exceeds
The plover's of the reeds;

The sweetest of all food
Is not so sweet as blood—
As a foe's blood—ha! ha!
Who will follow Reckwa?"

Thus ending, he the wampum tossed
Upon the ground and struck the post,
Whereon full many a warrior bold
Took up the belt, and boasting told,
Each in his turn, of trophies won,
Of deed or deeds of daring done;
And when the last had told his tale,
Ended the council with a wail
Dissonant and fiendish.

Reckwa now led toward the fell,
Whereby The Voice was known to dwell.
A gruesome place and lonely this;
At every step the serpent's hiss,
As forth their fiery tongues they shoot,
Gives warning to the stealthy foot.
Myriad bats the moonlight flecked,
While snarling wolves around them sneak'd.
Yet on they pressed with cautious tread
Along the steep where Reckwa led,

Who paused not till he stood before
The cavern's mouth, where oft of yore
Impious feet had gone to win
Approval of impending sin.
Approaching closely, then, Reckwa,
With voice loud, cried "Sketupah!"
"Sketupah!" came back the voice.
"Spirit of Evil, not by choice
Came Reckwa here to seek thine aid;
But that the Good Spirit forbade
Him to take vengeance on a foe,
He had not sought thy will to know."
"Thy will to know," came back again
The voice from the Spirit's den.

Forth from the cave Sketupah came,
And in his hand, above his head,
He bore a faggot torch, whose flame
In the dank darkness shone blood-red.
Cadav'rous was the Thing, and gaunt,
Whose form was clad in vesture scant;
He wore a girdle of bats' wings,
Dried frogs, and other gruesome things.
Ill the insignia on his head—

A raven's skin, with wings outspread ;
The sheath of a huge rattlesnake,
Blood-clotted still, hung round his neck ;
His sunken eyeballs yellow were,
And filled the soul with dread and fear.

“ Who called Sketupah, and for what
Have ye the Priest of Evil sought ? ”
He asked, waving his red torch o'er
The warriors' heads, who shrink and cow'r.

“ 'Tis Reckwa and his braves, who come
To seek thee in thy wakon home ;
We seek revenge, but first would know
If thy Master will hear ; if so,
What sacrifice will soonest ease
His hunger and his wrath appease ? ”

“ My Master must have blood,” the priest
Made answer, “ of reptile and beast ;
A she wolf and a rattlesnake,
And a tortoise, go quickly take,
And hither bring, that I may slay ;
Go ! quickly go ! do not delay ! ”

The wolf, tortoise, and snake were brought,
And killed and flayed upon the spot.

He bade them build a fire of pine,
Of hemlock, and the barren vine,
And of the bush whose pois'nous flow'r
With sick'ning odor fills each bow'r ;
Then when the fire was ready made,
The carcasses were on it laid.
The rattlesnake, with deadly fangs,
About his skinny neck he hangs ;
The tortoise shell his head did grace
(Its entrails dangling round his face) ;
And thus attired, begins to dance,
While to his Master thus he chants :

SKETUPAH'S SONG.

“ Man of the sable cheek,
Thing of the evil eye,
Voice of the cavern deep,
Spirit of Evil, hear thy priest,
Who slays for thee the snarling beast,
The rattlesnake and the tortoise.
Come round, come round, on sable wing,
And sniff the scent of the offering ;
Come, Spirit, come ! of the hollow voice,

From whom the timid maidens run,
And children fear and strong men shun ;
Come to the feast of the snake and the beast,
 Spirit of Evil, come !

 “ Voice of the cavern deep,
 Thing of the evil eye,
 Man of the sable cheek,
The sav'ry scents of the sacrifice
In wreaths of vapor upward rise ;
Then shall thy priest no favor gain ?
And is the sacrifice in vain ?
 Spirit of Evil, thing of death,
 Of the hollow eye and fetid breath !
Come round, come round, on sable wing !
Crisp and brown is the offering !
O, come to the feast of the snake and the beast,
 Spirit of Evil, come ! ”

He listened, then resumed again :
“ The offering is not in vain ;
All potent is the charm to draw
The Voice from out the mountain's maw.
Reckwa may go, the Spirit grants,
And all who join him in the dance,

Barring fate or some mischance,
Shall go and come with scalp-locks laden,
Wherewith to win the cherished maiden." *
Thus ended he the sick'ning strain,
And fled into the cave again.

Then Reckwa leaped into the ring,
His tomahawk high brandishing,
Which was the signal for each one
To follow and do as he had done.
Madly they whirl and turn and wheel,
Toe to toe, or heel to heel;
With outstretched arms and flaming eye,
Round and round the ring they fly,
Or feint to grapple with a foe,
Swinging their weapons to and fro,
Till ye had thought a tomahawk
Was sinking deep in each scalp-lock.

Yet fiercer grew the mimic strife,
As if fiends battled there for life;
Seemingly each was fury-blind,
Or terror seemed their hearts to bind,

* The brave having the greatest number of scalps to his credit was most popular with the maidens of his tribe or others.

As with imaginary foe
They strove or met with overthrow,
While no earth creatures ever wore
A semblance that befitted more
Goblin forms of a gruesome dream
Than flitted in that firelight's gleam.
Each cheek and brow was painted red,
While sable plumes waved on each head.
They towered, crouched, or grov'ling lay,
As went the fortunes of the fray,
Which ye 'd a real battle deemed,
Its mimicry so real seemed.

And now the quick step languid grows,
And now they seem no longer foes;
Hand locked in hand, they slowly weave
A figure representing Death,
Whereby they pledge not to deceive,
And plight eternal leal and faith.
Then ceased the dance, and the weird song
Went wailing the wild cliffs along,
Whose yawning rents caught up the strain
And hurled it back and forth amain,
Till, lessening, the echoes fail,

Like the spent voices of the gale ;
While slowly from the rites of wrong
They wend their way the crags among,
Descending ever as they go,
Until they reach the vale below,
Where, when the rendezvous was gained,
Anew his face each warrior stained,
And filled his muskeemoot with corn,
So that while yet the dews of morn
Lie sparkling on the violet's breast
He will have gone far on his quest
Of vengeance and renown.

THE WRAITH'S LEGEND OF THE IDOLS.

O, heard ye the sound of a bird on the wing,
As startled it fled from its perch in the pine ?
And hast thou not heard 'tis an ominous thing,
And blessed are they who hear not the sign ?
Maiden, who sings thee once loved as thou dost,
And fled from the lodge of her parents to stray
With the youth of her heart, who was loving and just ;
Yet, maiden, two forms thou wilt pass in the way,
The idols* of lovers and warriors to-day.

* An explanation will be gleaned from the legend told in the next few pages.

Thou hast heard of them oft, and the story's no dream;
Two gray, granite forms kneeling there thou wilt see
On the willowy banks of a dark, sluggish stream,
Just as they knelt on that ev'ning when they
Besought the Great Spirit their hunger to stay.

And many the trophies thou'lt find at their feet,
The gifts of the lover, the hunter, and priest,
Who thitherward journey with offerings meet,
For thus is their prowess or power increased
Who tender not offerings valued the least.

And, sister, we heard on that night of our flight
The flutter of wings* in the trees overhead,
And the we-ko-lis sang, as she's singing to-night,
As on through the moon-checked forest we sped,
Oppressed by a feeling of danger and dread.

The story is old, how that, famished and faint,
We died in the way to the goal that we sought,
By decree of the Master of Life, whom our plaint
Had softened to pity—who mercif'ly taught
The sorrow with which disobedience is fraught.

* The flight of a bird from its perch at night was portentous of evil.

Thus in a retrospective way
Sang she the monitory lay;
But in another, different strain,
Renewed the tale and sang again:

And wouldst thou the tale of the Idols hear?
Then hearken, sister, I'll tell it to thee,
Why the brave his bow, his arrows and spear
Lays at their feet, when it chances that he
Passes that way in his travels; and why
The maiden with hair of the grape's dark hue,
Whose eye is the eye of the birds that coo
At evening time in the copse near by,
Goes there with offerings meet—
The cherished gifts of her lover true—
The skin of the striped lynx he slew
Ere moccasins decked his feet;*
The rainbow tail of the Spirit Bird,
And the shells dyed red in the sunset's blush
(Wherein the song of the waves is heard);

* The age at which they were admitted to man's estate and allowed to put on moccasins, usually about the age of sixteen. A trophy in the way of the skin of any ferocious beast, secured before that time, was highly prized, especially by the sweetheart to whom *presented*.

The tuft* of the we-ko-lis, heard at hush
Of ev'ning's calm, where first in her ear
He whispered of love in tones so dear,
As they stood there together.

The son of the Elk I met in the way,
And I asked him whitherward tending ;
"I go," he said, "to the Idols to lay
At their feet a gift transcending
All other gifts, and to ask them to make
My soul as clean as the soul of a child,
And my heart like the panther's, fierce and wild ;
And, if there be fear in my veins, to take
The cowardly drop away ;
That my song be that of the fearless brave,
And that scalp-locks on my lodge-pole wave—
A new one every day ;
To give to mine eye the sleep and dream
That show the coming of things to be,
And to speed my bark across the stream,
When I perchance am forced to flee—
For this I go to the Idols alone,
The man and woman and dog of stone,
That dwell by the murky stream."

*It was customary for a youth to try to secure the "tuft," or scalp, of the bird first heard to sing near the trysting place of himself and sweetheart, and present it to her, a mark of esteem she greatly cherished.

THE LEGEND.

Two Ricaras, youth and maid,
From their infancy had strayed
Side by side, or gaily played
In the sunshine, in the shade ;
From the coppice, through the glade,
 In the dingle, in the dell,
 Through the coves, upon the fell ;
 By the river, in the sand,
 Picking pebbles from the strand ;
Tossing them into the water,
Just to see the minnows scatter,
Then return and nibble, nibble,
At the snowy little pebble.

Thus it was together they
Passed the happy days away,
Ever playing, ever straying,
Always doing, always saying
That which children say and do,
Just as I and just as you
Did when we were children too ;
Picking berries, plucking grapes,

Getting in a thousand scrapes ;
In and out, and here and there,
Into mischief everywhere,
Always trying to be good,
Though it seemed they never could.

Thus one father to the other
Said one day, as they together
Sat beside their lodge a-smoking,
Each a childish head a-stroking :
“ Separated they were never,
But have played together ever,
On the green, or by the river,
He my bow and she thy quiver
Stealing, for the fun of teasing,
When they saw it was n't pleasing ;
In and out the lodges slipping,
Up and down the hills a-tripping,
Down the dell, across the dingle,
Together they and never single ;
Hand in hand, laughing, singing,
Or upon the branches swinging ;
Robbing nests, or squabs a-catching,
In the leaves for nuts a-scratching ;

Threading bosky dell and bower
For the smiling little flower;
Peering into thicket places,
Through the little open spaces,
Or peeping out, when they were in
The interstices with a grin.

“Thus the eaglet in my eyrie,
And thy dove, thy sylvan fairy,
From the dawn of morning go
To the even, to and fro.
Wherefore, if the thought be pleasing,
And, as years go on increasing,
They still seem to love each other,
Think you not 't were better, brother,
That they still remain together—
And your dove, your sylvan fairy,
And the eaglet of my eyrie
Be pledged, even now, to marry?”

Thus replied the other father:
“I'd not thought of it, but rather
Like the thought, which is a wise one,
And henceforth we'll keep our eyes on
Them, and watch the buds as slowly

They unfold to that sweet, holy,
Tender feeling young hearts cherish,
And which but in death can perish.

“But twice eight times the leaves shall come,
 (Beautiful leaves !)
But twice eight times the flowers bloom,
 (Beautiful things !)
But twice eight times the birds shall mate,
 (Beautiful birds !)
Ere they shall reach that happy state,
And, if constant still, be wed.”
Thus it was her father said.

“’T is well and good,” replied the friend ;
“Thy tongue it hath no forked end,
And henceforth unto thy daughter
My son I pledge, and no matter
What may come or what may go,
Their engagement’s even so.”

So it was the babes were plighted,
And the friends their pipes relighted,
And in silence smoked away
Till the waning of the day.

And when these two babes were grown
To the age when love is known
By the sweet throbbings of the heart,
Or language of the eyes in part,
Then to them their troth was told,
And more than ever now the wold
They together trod, in search
Of the berry and the birch,
Or from the maize the birds to fright,
Or seek the bittern's eggs, and light
A fire and cook them on the ground,
While merry peals of laughter round,
Amidst the silence of the dell,
In rippling waves of joy fell.

At last a change appeared, and Heav'n
Turned to gall the sweets she'd given;
The maiden's sire had watched the youth,
And noticed with regret and ruth
That he nor took to warriors' ways,
Nor painted as the Ricaras—
Red on the brow, red on the cheek—
Nor smoothly shaved the head and sleek,
All save the scalp-lock warriors wear,

A solitary tuft of hair,
But rather seemed to seek the shade,
Or idly through the forest strayed.
Wherefore the maiden's sire to her
Did one day say in tones severe :
" When I thee did pledge in troth
To the young Ricara youth,
I nor thought nor deemed but he
Would a valiant warrior be ;
Such my hopes are doomed to ruth,
For I see that he, forsooth,
Hath no heart for war's alarms,
But rather turns away from arms.
Wherefore, daughter, seeing he
Is not what 't was thought he 'd be,
All love must cease 'twixt thee and him,
Nor be indulged in twilights dim,
Nor in the moon's effulgent light,
Nor in the middle of the night,
When lovers seek the maiden's couch,*

* The manner in which a youth proceeded to find out if he was favored of a maiden was to repair to her lodge after all had retired, light a shaving or splinter at the smouldering fire, approach her couch, and gently wake her, and if she at once blew out the flame he was thus assured she loved him, but if not he knew his suit was vain.

Thereby anew their leal to vouch ;
For since thy lover's weak in heart,
Woman in mind, a doe* in part,
Nor boasts of deeds of valor done,
Or scalps or trophies boldly won,
But seems the rather to admire
Ferns and flowers, and aspire
To the labor in the field,
Than a warrior's spear to wield,
I will not keep my pledge, or see
My daughter wed to such as he.

"I bid thee see the youth once more,
And tell him that the troth is o'er ;
Tell him that Red Wing's child can wed
Only such as shaves his head,
Or paints the face or bends the bow,
And loves the war cry of the foe ;
My daughter hears?—'T is well !"

Then down the maiden's cheeks amain
Swift ran the tears, like summer rain ;
"I hear, my father, and my heart

* A doe was considered the weakest and most cowardly of animals. Hence the comparison.

Well-nigh must break, if we must part;
I know my lover's arm is weak,
And that he does not paint the cheek,
Or shave the head, though man in years,
And that his heart is like the deer's;
Yet it is hard to break in twain
Hearts bounden by the golden chain—
The love which twice eight years hath wrought,
Through all which we were told and taught,
He, that I should be his wife,
Tend his lodge and make his life
All that a woman's love could make;
And I, that he in time would take
Me to his lodge, and love's sweet crown
Upon my life should settle down.
Such the tale by young and old
In our willing ears was told;
Think you now that I could drive
Him out of my heart and live?"
But the father would not hear,
And turned instead a deafen'd ear.

And how fared the youth, think you?
With aching heart and tears and rue,

All night long he wander'd through
The silent wood, his dog and he ;
At morn he sat beneath a tree,
Still bewailing his sad lot,
When he heard, or so he thought,
A voice in the purple dim,
Softly, sweetly calling him ;
Whereon at once he sought and found
His love in grief and woe profound ;
Who forth into his fond embrace
Threw herself, and hid her face
Upon his loving breast in tears,
Wild-voicing her grief and fears.

Pledging, then, their love anew,
Themselves they marry, and start through
The wilderness, to seek a life
Far elsewhere as man and wife.
But the woods were scarce of game,
And despair with hunger came ;
For love alone hunger's desires
Could not quench, and forest fires
Had blasted herb and grape and nut,
And left them now no choice but

Death in the wilderness, or scath,
Should they return and face the wrath
Of one whom well they knew would lay
A direful hand on them, or slay.
Wherefore, perplexed and sore distressed,
They knelt upon the ground and pressed
The Master to in pity give
The needed sustenance to live,
Or, in default of that, to send
The Messenger of Death to end
The agony of hunger's pangs,
More dreadful than the panther's fangs.
And did the Master hear their plea?
Sister, wait, and you shall see.

Slowly the shades of ev'ning fell,
And twilight sounds began to swell;
The we-ko-lis its pulsing song
Sent quavering the hills among;
The night-hawk and the muckawa,*
The wolf, the owl, and carcajou,†
Each one by hunger's pangs assailed,
Loudly or low his woe bewailed,
Until the solitude profound

* The black bear. † The wildcat.

Did all but tremble with the sound.
Well knew the lovers perils dread
Encompassed them, and they had fled,
Had they but had the strength to fly,
Although they had but prayed to die.
Yet weaken'd though they were, alarm,
And instinct to escape from harm,
Lent to their trembling limbs the strength,
And they essayed to flee at length;
But scarce a dozen steps they'd gone,
Ere they again did sink upon
The blacken'd mold from weakness sheer,
The frightful sounds still in their ear.

Meanwhile the twilight duskier grew,
And deeper shades around them threw,
And when despair had well-nigh dried
The fountains of their hearts, they spied,
Upon a drooping bough near by,
Some grapes, and which to reach they try,
With that last effort hope imparts
To hunger-famished, fainting hearts.
But when well-nigh the prize they'd gained,
A voice their eager steps restrained,
And to their quest'ning look replied :

“ ’Tis scarce an hour ago ye cried
Unto the Master to bestow
Upon thee food or death, and lo !
The Master’s messenger am I,
Who hath decreed that ye shall die !
 The grapes in yonder tree ye spied
 Had been as pebbles in your mouth ;
 They are but shrivel’d clusters, dried
 And blasted by the heat and drouth.

“ The Master hath decreed that ye
Henceforth a monument shall be
Unto the Indian youth, to show
The fate of one who did not know
The use of tomahawk or bow ;
And to the maiden, passing by,
The end of one who dared defy
Her parent’s wish, and flee with one
Who never valiant deed had done.”
So saying, they to stone were turned,
And thus, my sister, thou hast learned
How it was come the Idols there,
To which the maids and braves repair,
Bearing offerings, every one,
To youth and maid and dog of stone.

THIRD CANTO.

FAIR is the morn ; the summer sun
Not yet his circuit hath begun ;
The purple shadows of the dawn
Still linger and yet linger on ;
A dewy hush pervades the wood,
And voiceless is the solitude
But for yon thrush's song.

Fit hour it is to dream and muse,
And give to thoughts the themes they choose,
And mark the colors they assume,
As, creeping from their cells of gloom,
They change to brighter hues.

Whose heart is ne'er to musing giv'n
Has little of that precious leav'n
Which lightens and enlivens life,
And gives one courage for the strife,
And lights the way to heaven.

Who muses much is sure to find
An ornament to grace his mind—
A recompense that never brings
A barren hope of better things—
A fruitless word or deed.

A boundless continuity
Of doubt obscures futurity
From those who turn a heedless ear
To Nature, and refuse to hear
The songs her Muse would sing.

Life is a brief epitome
Of that boundless eternity,
And every day we turn a leaf,
Record a joy or a grief,
A virtue or a sin.

But wherefore longer moralize?
Who is not ignorant is wise
Enough to see whither would tend
The thought unleashed, left to its end.

Go where you will, the heart's the same,
When glowing with love's mystic flame;
The civilized and savage heart

Alike feel Cupid's subtle dart.
Hence, who himself hath loved must feel
A sympathy for those whose weal
Is jeopardized for that they dare
Take stern resistance unaware
And hazard all in flight.

Once out of sight the signal fire,
Opeechee's courage mounted higher;
New visions rose, new hopes were born,
Till she was now no more forlorn.
Love lent a zest to word and tone,
And danger was nor felt or known.
Gleeful she spoke, or lightly laughed,
And trusted to her lover's craft
To foil pursuit, for well she knew
Her father would indeed pursue.
What bootied this, when Annawan
Discoursed in tones of love, and drew
Her on to count all danger gone?

Yet ever and anon they start,
With wildly palpitating heart,
As slipping from its perch is heard,
In hasty flight, a startled bird

(For to untutored minds like theirs
A rustling wing ill-omen bears),
Yet still the rainbow hues of love
Such shadows from their fancies drove,
And Hope renewed her golden beams,
Adding new visions to their dreams,
Till Bliss invaded Fear's domain,
And snapped her chafing cords in twain ;
For love is swayed by little things,
And soars aloft on airy wings,
Or, like a plummet, sinks beneath
The wave which rises at a breath.
Vibrating thus 'twixt hope and fear,
Their hearts were light or darkly drear.
Forgetful of the whims of Fate,
Which 'whelms hearts sooner or late,
They, while the dream of bliss held sway,
Talked in that glad, light-hearted way,
Lovers are wont, when on the tide
Of Hope towards Love's goal they glide ;
Nor deemed it folly to descend
To those light themes which ever lend
Enchantment to young lives.

They paused beside a limpid stream,
Just as the sun unleashed a beam,
And sent it quiv'ring on its way
To dissipate the sober gray
That lingered after dawn,
Here they the morning meal prepared,
The first together they had shared;
Annawan's bow, true to his aim,
Had furnished them a brace of game,
And pounded corn supplied the need
(When baked upon a stone) of bread.

With growing pride and rapturous thrill,
Annawan marked Opeechee's skill,
And deemed himself most fortunate
That he was blessed with such a mate.
And when the simple meal was o'er
They journeyed onward as before,
Nor paused again until the sun
Well-nigh his daily course had run,
When, much fatigued and hungry, they
Decide their weary steps to stay,
And pass the night beside the way.
Thus far one only rest alone

Was all their weary feet had known,
Though half a hundred miles or more
The distance they had traveled o'er.

They often paused to view a scene,
As on some mountain crest they stood,
Where far the undulating green
(A waving waste of solitude,
Punctured anon with barren peaks,
Or softened by the misty streaks
Of purple haze, which, floating, lay
In the depressions far away),
In heaving billows rose and fell,
Like a vast ocean's ebb and swell.
'Tis such a scene they now behold,
Draped in the waning sunlight's gold,
While standing on a pinnacle
(Above a gloomy, rock-bound dell),
Whose tempest-riven peaks of stone,
Like minarets in ruin, shone,
Reflecting back the vermeil hue
The dying sunlight o'er them threw.

The stream whereby their camp was made
Lay deep embrowned in ev'ning shade,

'Twixt counter cliffs, uprearing high
Their shiver'd crests toward the sky;
And as it wound its way between
Opposing mats of foliage green,
Looked like a sinuous line of light,
As seen from some surrounding height.

Deep was and drear this cavern'd glen,
Of ev'ry prowling beast the den,
Where reptiles basked on ev'ry crag,
Or oftentimes were seen to drag,
Sluggish and slow, their length along
The crevices those crags among.
Tall pines in rent and fissure grew,
Ash, birch, and rhododendron too,
Leaning as if they fain would lave
Their foliage in the sparkling wave.

At dark the sky was overcast,
And somber clouds went scudding past,
Wherein the livid lightning played,
And flashed around the crags, or flayed
From tip to root the supple pine,
And seared the leaves on fern and vine,
Or wrenched the cedar from the rift,

As back and forth from cliff to cliff
And peak to peak it madly leap'd,
Or into yawning caverns peep'd,
Where cringing, cow'ring panthers there
Shrank whining from the livid glare.

Then rattling, pealing, crash on crash,
Close on each vivid, glitt'ring flash,
Came the loud thunder's deaf'ning shocks,
Until it seemed the very rocks
From peak to base must all be riv'n,
Or melted by the lurid lev'n,
Which streamed incessantly around
The beetling crags, or zigzag wound
Its way toward the quaking ground;
The while the wind careering came,
And joined its fury to the flame,
And swept the forest in its path,
And lashed the mountains in its wrath;
Then rending with a fearful roar,
The pent-up clouds their torrents pour
In sheets upon the earth.

At last the less'ning rays of lev'n,
Receding, vanish in the heav'n,

Where rifts of blue may now be seen,
Like azure flakes the clouds between,
While the winds, sunken to a breeze,
Scarce stir the leaves upon the trees,
Though the deep-braying thunder still
Is heard beyond the farthest hill.
Then 'mid the tatters of the storm,
 Half hiding, half revealing,
The lucid splendor of her form,
 The full, round moon came stealing,
And pierced the foliage with her beams,
Wherein the pendent raindrop gleams,
Like gems in em'rald setting.

And when the storm was fully past,
Forth came the lovers then and cast
About for some secure retreat,
Where they might pass in slumber sweet
The hours of night away.
And while in slumber they recline,
Lull'd by the breezes in the pine,
Perhaps a legendary tale
May serve a purpose, and avail
To reawaken and infuse
New life into the lagging Muse.

Near where the lovers passed the night,
Above them, and almost in sight,
A brook traversed the glen—
The narrow glen which lay between
Two rugged bluffs, where ivy green
And rhododendron grew.
Melsingay was the name, 't is shown,
By which the little stream was known,
And following is the tale :

THE LEGEND OF MELSINGAY.

The legend's old as any told,
And as true as any,
And for ages manifold
Has been told to many.

Sire to son the tale has spun,
Through each generation,
And never did a single one
Doubt its validation.

False or true, the Wraith to you
Recounts the legend hoary ;
Be ye the judges whether true
Or mythical the story.

Long, long ago a Manito—
The patron saint of lovers—
Had his dwelling-place below
Where dancing, gleaming, hovers

The misty spray of Melsingay,
Where, decked and painted gaily,
Outlined in a shadowy way,
Ye might behold him daily.

A little maid one morning strayed,
While out in quest of flowers,
Unwittingly near the cascade,
And there beneath the showers

Of mist and spray beheld, they say,
The Manito, reposing
On a mat of mosses gray;
Whereon the child, supposing

At sight of her his ire would stir,
Was on the point of fleeing,
When he rose and smiled on her,
Which the maiden, seeing,

Took to be a pledge that she
Had no cause to fear him,
But instead a token he
Would she 'd venture near him.

“ You need n't fear to venture near,
Or contemplate retreating ;
'T was lucky chance that brought you here,”
Was the Spirit's greeting.

“ An orphan child,” the Spirit mild
Continued, speaking slowly,
“ Is ward of my protection, child,
Be it high or lowly.

“ And when in need of friend indeed,
Such have but to speak me,
And I will lend a willing heed,
And succor, if they seek me.

“ So should it chance as years advance,
That stress of woes should wield thee,
Seek me at once ere they enhance,
And I will surely shield thee.”

Saying which he waved adieu
And vanished from the maiden's view,
Who stood a while as in a spell,
Ere she sought her lodge to tell
What she had seen and heard.

In time it chanced the Lenape maid
Required and sought in haste the aid
The Manito had proffered.

A young Mohican captive, bound
Fast in her people's lodge, had found
Love's favor in the maiden's eyes,
Whereon she cuts his bonds and tries
To get him to depart;
Instead he urges her that he
Is now less than ever free,
In that she holds his heart.

“Thou liberty of limb dost give,
And unimpassioned bidst me live,
While my heart you fetter
With soft meshes of sweet sighs,
And shy glances of thine eyes,
Knowing well 't were better
That thy people take my life,

If thou refuse to be my wife.
Nay, constancy to thee, fair one,
Forbids me to go forth alone,
Leaving my heart behind."

The maiden, blushing, hides her eyes
Beneath their drooping lids, and tries
To seem both firm and kind.
"Nay," said she, "it can not be;
Seek thy safety now, and flee;
'Tis gratitude you feel,
And not love's flame which would abide
Were I forever at thy side,
As time would soon reveal."

"Then my deliverer, in turn,
Hath become my captor stern,
And here must I abide;
For to escape I will not try,
Unless thou dost consent to fly
With me and be my bride."

A maiden's heart is never cold—
Susceptible, of tender mold
It is, and so not strange

That she should ask him to repeat
Over again the language sweet,
And that her mind should change.

“ And if I then must be thy bride,
Accept me likewise for thy guide,
And I will lead thee by a path
Whereby thou shalt escape the wrath
Of those who seek thy life.
In my childhood once I strayed
Near Melsingay's fair Cascade
(Whose Manito's my okkis*),
And there may we in safety dwell,
For my okkis loves me well,
And will surely shield us.”

Thus assured the youth agreed,
Whereon they started forth with speed,
And at early dawn they found
Themselves within the Cascade's sound,
Where they beheld the Manito
In the faint, pinkish, purple glow
Of the full flush of dawn.

* Guardian Spirit.

So tall he was, and seemed his pow'r
So great, instinctively they cow'r,
Seeing which, the Spirit said,
In kindly tones : " Be not afraid,
But come thou near, that I may know
Why came ye here, and whence ye go? "

The maiden then, with downcast eyes,
Thus to the Manito replies :
" This is my lover here, and I
Besought him, since we needs must fly
The anger of the Lenape braves,
That we here seek Melsingay's caves,
And ask my okkis to protect
Us from their wrath, when they detect
Our flight and give pursuit."

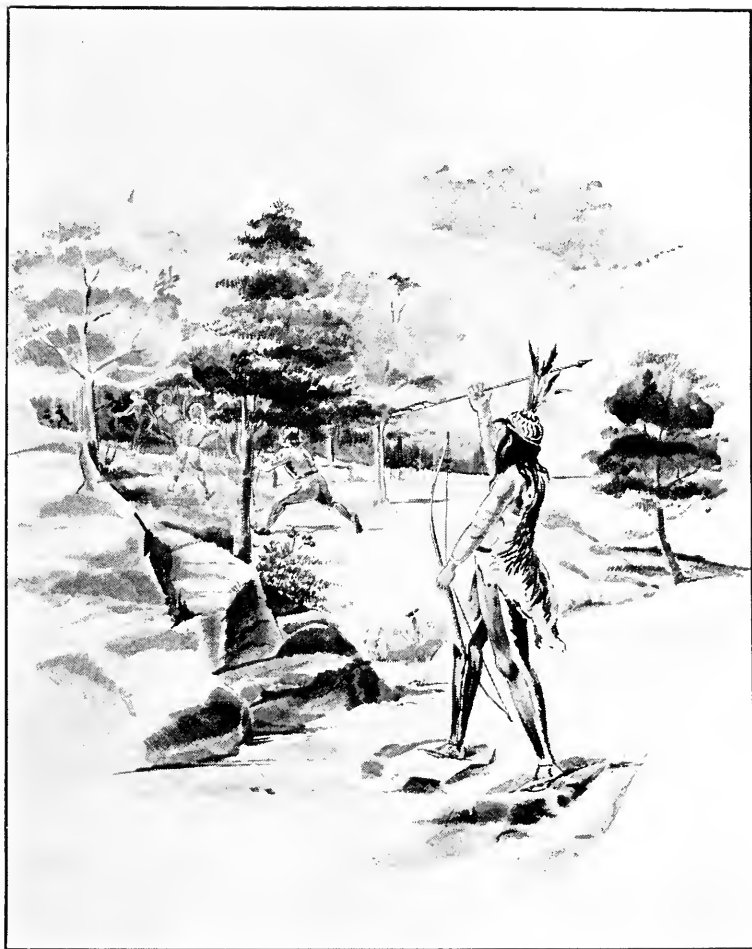
" Granted is all my daughter would,"
Replied the Manito, whose mood
Seemed kindly and benign.
" But thou, young man, lest unaware
Thy foes should take thee here and bear
Thee hence to torture's rack,
Take thou this robe of mine and don—
This gray wolf robe, and put it on,

And these gray eagle feathers place
Upon thy head, and paint thy face
So as to look like mine."

So saying, with a little toss
He threw the wolfskin robe across
Melsingay's pool, and likewise, too,
The crest of eagle feathers threw,
All which Mecasha donned.

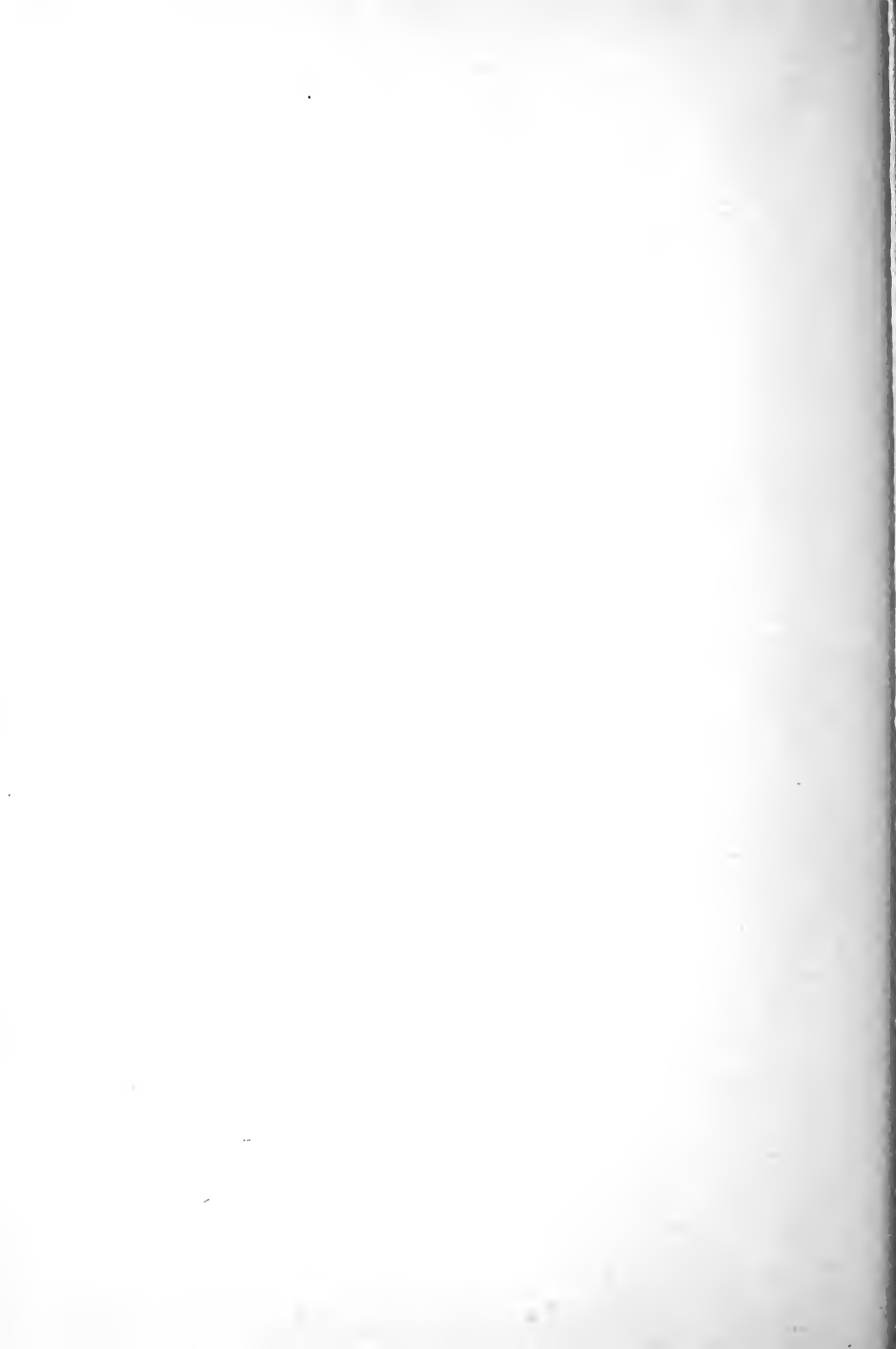
And well it was the Manito
Did such kindly interest show,
For scarcely had he vanished when
Pursuing braves filed in the glen.
Bidding the maiden seek the cave,
Mecasha leaped midway the wave,
Where, lighting on a mossy stone,
He stood upright, passive, alone,
Stood there alone and motionless,
So like the Spirit, form and dress,
The Manito himself had been
Deceived if he had seen him then.

'T was thus he stood when, with a yell,
Pursuing braves rushed in the dell,
But turned and wildly fled



“ But turned and wildly fled
When they beheld Mecasha’s hand
In menace raised toward the band.”

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When they beheld Mecasha's hand
In menace raised toward the band ;
All save a lover of the maid,
Who never paused as he essayed
To put an arrow in its place,
And draw his weapon to his face,
When, quick as thought, Mecasha drew
An arrow from his quiver too,
And ere the fated warrior knew
The fatal barb had pierced him through.

So when adjacent tribes had heard
How the Manito, by anger stirred
(For such they deemed Mecasha),
Had slayed the warrior who essayed
His sacred precincts to invade,
A deeper reverence was felt
By all who near the Cascade dwelt.

Thus were the lovers left to dwell
Here unmolested, and they tell
That lovers ever after sought,
When close pursued, the sacred spot.
I know not if the story's true
(It happened ere my time) ;

I only tell the tale to you
Just as I've often heard it told
By timid maid and warrior bold,
Who doubted not 't was so.

And so it chanced our lovers found
That they had passed the night so near
The Cascade that its silv'ry sound
Fell with a tinkle on the ear;
Remembering, then, the legend old,
Annawan and his bride made bold
To seek the Cascade, where, behold!
A form arose amidst the spray,
And stood forth in the misty gray
Of early dawn, and speaking, said:
"Annawan, be thou not afraid,
But hither come, thou and the maid,
And be partakers of my cheer,—
Reckwa will scarcely seek thee here."

At first abashed, but now assured,
They feared no more, but yet demurred,
Uncertain if 't were best or no
To tarry here or onward go;
But when the Being turned about,

Annawan bounded with a shout,
And grasped his hand and stroked his cheek,
And when for joy he could speak,
Cried "brother" in his native tongue,
And close about him quickly flung
His brawny arms, evincing joy
Less like a brave than like a boy.

Meanwhile Opeechee stood amazed,
Believing Annawan was crazed,
And doubted not each moment he
Stark where he stood would stricken be ;
But when she, as if she 'd know
Why Annawan were acting so,
Advanced and stood upon the rim
Of the small pool and gazed at him
Her lover then, as if ashamed
That he such weakness had proclaimed,
Turned, quickly facing her, and said :
"This is my brother, mourned as dead,
For lo, these many moons.

"I have not heard his story yet,
And know not why it was he let
Us deem him dead, though well I know

No idle fancy led him to.
Once, while my brother and some braves
Strayed near the Lake of Talking Caves,
A band surrounded them and slew,
As we supposed, all them but two.
But now I see some lucky fate
Saved him, and he escaped their hate."

Mecumseh thereupon advanced,
And in few words told how it chanced
That the foe had failed to find
Him where, concealed, he lay behind
A fallen tree, where he had crept,
Bleeding from wounds, and where he kept
Concealed for days, too weak to try
To leave the place, lest he should die.

It chanced the tree lay on the brink
Of a small stream, which gave him drink,
While herbs and buds the meager food
Supplied that gave him back his blood.
Thus for days he lived ; at length
He felt that he could trust his strength,
And so set forth on his return,
Was captured and condemned to burn,

To satisfy his captors' hate,
But once again was saved by fate.

The daughter of the haughty chief
Had come, he said, to his relief,
And cut his bonds at dead of night,
And joined him in his hasty flight;
And even now she was so near,
Each word he uttered she could hear.

“Queenly her form, so fair her face,
I know not one of equal grace,
Save the fair creature at thy side,
Whom thou hast chosen for thy bride.
Then, brother, sister, wouldst thou see
A sister, come and go with me.”
Which said, he turned and led the way
To where a monster boulder lay,
O’errun with moss and lichens gray,
Near which, upon an ample mat
Of purple hue, a maiden sat.

Comely she was of form, and fair,
And met them with that timid air
Native to those who tread the wilds
Of Nature and her shadowy aisles.

Upon the mat beside her she
Made room and beckoned Opeechee,
Who took the proffered seat and placed
Her arms about the other's waist,
Who in her turn fondly caressed
Opeechee, as upon her breast
She gently laid her head.

Needless to say these lovers then
Passed the day here in the glen,
Near the Cascade of Melsingay,
Which sung its song and tripped its spray,
Radiant in the glimmer
Of the sunlight piercing through
The green branches of the yew
And the twining ivy.

THE DIRGE.

Hark ye, what strain is that I hear,
Low quav'ring on the midnight drear?
It is the Death Song* of the braves
Who've passed beyond the lethean waves,
Who hastened forth with martial songs

* The Indian, seeing or feeling death was inevitable, always sang what was termed the Death Song.

To seek revenge for fancied wrongs,
Against the protest of the priest,
Whose aged hands prepared the feast
The Master's will to learn.

And hark! there is another cry,
Which brings the tear to every eye
Of wife and maid, upon whose ear
The echo falls so shrill and clear.
It is the death-cry* of the few,
Who to their tribe return in rue,
And to the anxious ones it shows
That Death has set his seal on those
For whom they're waiting now.
And that! ah me! it is the wail
That bursts from quiv'ring lips, when pale,
Heart-broken wives and mothers learn
Their loved ones can no more return,
But sleep the sleep no waking knows
A-near the camp-fires of their foes.

* Those who escaped to return home after a disastrous expedition always, on getting in hearing of the camp of their tribe, gave out a shrill, peculiar cry, which was for the purpose of notifying the tribe that they had met with disastrous losses. This was called the Death Cry.

Sad is my heart, I can not sing
The warning I to-night would bring
To those whose rashness well I know
Must bring them to untimely woe.
Oh! could my people learn a life
Is forfeit to each moment's strife,
And for each life so lost at stake,
A parent's heart or wife's must break,
I might not then be called to warn
As now I am, from night to morn,
Through Time's unchanging course.

FOURTH CANTO.

THEIR preparations at an end,
Reckwa now bade his braves descend
With him the river's course at dawn,
And see if they could chance upon
The trail whereby the lovers fled;
And, ere the sun his flaming red
Disk showed above the trees,
They'd found the bark the lovers left,
And soon its prow the waters cleft,
As Reckwa's ready hand,
With steady dip and stroke of oar,
Propelled it tow'rd the other shore,
Where late the lovers landed.
With cautious eye he scanned the ground
Till he a slight depression found,
Which to his eye most clearly showed
A warrior's foot had lately trode,
Wherefore, he sagely guessed the pair
Had taken to the mountains there.

The bark then to the other side
He quickly drove, and soon the tide
His braves had crossed, when singly they
Followed as Reckwa led the way
Toward the mountain top ;
A moment on whose pinnacle
They paused and scanned the surface well,
Where soon another print they spied,
And took the trail with measured stride,
Nor paused they through the morn or noon,
Nor till the stars and lucid moon
Were floating in the heavens.

The eve was humid, close, and warm,
And well we know a fearful storm
Swept the waste wilderness ;
Wherefore, Reckwa the following dawn
Discerned the truants' trail was gone,
And, like a ship all rudderless,
They now were left in sore distress,
Not knowing whither course to take,
If east or westward of the lake
That barred the present course.
At last it was decided they

Would here divide, some go each way,
And meet the other side.

A party of the Ojibway,
Wand'ring near Melsingay,
Was discovered that same day
By the chief Mecumseh,
And led in triumph to the glen,
Where Annawan, as we have seen,
And he had met before.

Meanwhile old Reckwa and his braves
Compassed the lake, whose restful waves
Lay pillowed on their wood-bound shores,
Where far above the eagle soars
Backward and forth across the way,
Watching the sportive fish at play
A-near the pebbly strand.

Reckwa, dejected, sat apart
Communing thus with his sad heart,
While some the ev'ning meal prepared,
But which the old man scarcely shared,
So sad his heart and sore:

“Despite the fate, which seems to lend
Assistance to the feet that wend

Their way in flight through this wild waste,
Sweet vengeance yet Reckwa shall taste,
Though now the chase seems vain.
Until the storm's flood-waves effaced
Their course, old Reckwa clearly traced
The fugitives, and ere this hour
Had had the villain in his power
And slaked his vengeance dire.
There is no spot in this vast wild
I would not dare to gain my child;
Even to the dread Manito
Of Melsingay I'd dare to go,
Should he essay my foe to shield
From vengeance such as I have steeled
My heart to wage on him.
Ha! and who knows but thence they fled,
Knowing full well the Indian's dread
Of the great Manito?
Let's see; 't is but a little way
To the Cascade of Melsingay,
And thither on the morrow morn
Will I wend my way, and warn
The Manito, if they are there,
The subjects of his dreaded care,

That even he can not deter
Me in my efforts to claim her,
And slay the Ojibway."

Having decided which, he rose
And forth proceeded to disclose
The plan he meant to act upon,
Ever the sun had flushed the dawn
And drove the mists away.
Thus settled, each his robe around
Him drew, and dropped upon the ground,
And lost fatigue in sleep;
And, leaving them to their repose,
We'll turn to where Melsingay flows,
And note the Ojibway,
Who, too, are wrapt in slumber sweet,
Unconscious that their calm retreat
A dauntless foe will soon invade,
And carnage stain the restful glade,
Where they to-night their beds have made
Beneath the radiant moon,
Whose silv'ry beams, leaf-shadow flecked,
Disclose their faces, daubed or streaked
With the ochres they have decked
Every passive feature.

At morn both camps are soon a-stir ;
Their simple meal of moose or deer
Is over ere the mists of dawn
From the mountain's brow is gone.
The Ojibways, with their pipes, recline
About the camp, beneath the pine,
Singly or grouped, as it doth please,
Contentedly they take their ease ;
No apprehensions do they feel,
And no forebodings o'er them steal.

Not so the band by Reckwa led,
Who even now with stealthy tread
Are wending toward the peaceful scene,
Through marshy fens, 'neath foliage green,
O'er rocky steeps, through deep defiles,
Onward through the boundless wilds,
All heedless of the startled cry
Of startful fowl that flit and fly,
Or frightened deer that scamper by.
Onward they steal, till suddenly
Old Reckwa drops upon his knee,
And sweeps the matted leaves away,
Revealing footprints in the clay.

"A woman's track! my daughter's!" he
Declared in tones vehemently,
"And the base Ojibway's!"
At the same moment, too, they hear
The sound of trickling water near—
The Cascade of Melsingay.
"Ha!" quoth Reckwa, "just as I thought,
The fools the Manito have sought!
Be ready, braves, and should ye see
The Ojibway, leave him to me;
Let no man's hand but mine the blow
Inflict that smites the dastard low.
My conscience never could know rest
Were other barb than mine his breast
To penetrate and flush the gore
That I would have from his heart's core.
'Tis not enough that I should see
Him welt'ring in his blood, if he
Die not by Reckwa's hand.
But should his hand 'gainst mine prevail,
Then be ye ready to assail
And slay him who did even dare,
By subtle wiles, my dove to snare!"
So saying, he looked to his bow,

Adjusts his tomahawk, and so
Seemingly satisfied, the path
Resumed, contending with his wrath,
Which seemed an all-consuming flame,
That kindled quickly at the name
Of the young Ojibway,
Who, though unconscious that the foe
(Whose movements only time could show)
Was even then near his retreat,
Was yet not unprepared to meet
An unexpected blow ;
For that a seeming something seemed
To warn of danger he had deemed
Remote an hour ago,
And to his idle braves, who stood
Or lounged about in listless mood,
His faint, half apprehensive fear
He did impart, and bade them near
And on their guard remain.

“ Look to thy quivers and be sure
Each bow-string's such as would endure
An unexpected strain ;
For know Reckwa, should he assail,
Is not a chief whose heart would quail

Before an equal foe ;
And all his band are dauntless braves,
And not a set of cunning knaves,
And strike a fearless blow.

“ So keep thy weapons well in hand,
And let a couple of the band
Go forth and reconnoitre ;
And should an enemy be near,
Or ye suspicious sounds should hear,
Return at once to quarter,
That we for conflict may prepare,
And not be caught, as in a snare
The unsuspecting quail is,
When the hunter spreads his net,
While its wings with dew are wet,
And its power to sail is
Counterbalanced by the dew,
Which hath penetrated through
Till helpless wing and tail are.
Go now, braves, and be alert,
And thy senses keen exert,
Nor let us doubt thy valor.”

Admonished thus, two braves set forth,
One by the south, one by the north,
To meet upon the east.
Cautiously each trusty brave,
From the west side crossed the wave,
By a short detour,
List'ning, peering with that trained stealth,
Which is not less a warrior's wealth
Than are strength and daring.

Onward thus a while they stole,
O'er the soft and spongy mould,
Seeing naught nor hearing
Sound of man or living thing,
Save the startled fowl a-wing,
Or a deer careering
Through the tangled underbrush,
Or the clear notes of the thrush,
And the beetles whirring ;
Till suddenly he on the north
Perceived, he thought, forms gliding forth
'Cross a little clearing,
When, watching closer then, he saw
One he fancied was Reckwa,
From his age and bearing.

Retreating from his covert then
Cautiously he sought the glen,
Revealing what he there had seen
Amidst the spruce and laurel green,
Whereon, quickly and silently,
Annawan and Mecumseh
Posted their band in such a way
As best they deemed for sudden fray ;
And who with tensive, breathless hush,
Then watched each opening in the bush,
Across the rippling water.
Expectant, more than anxious, they
Seemed to bide the coming fray,
Judging from each visage,
Which lay in stolid passiveness,
And lit'rally expressionless,
Save the look expectant,
Which grew until each face did seem
With a pale, cop'rish light to gleam,
While a fiendish glitter
Scintillated from each eye,
Like the igneous flakes that fly
From the dingy smithy.

Who hath not watched impending strife,
Where Death sits balancing each life,
To see which is the better
For the purpose of his cause—
The adjustment of the laws
'Twixt Life and Mortality—
Knows not nor feels life's sweetness all,
Or bitterness, sees he not fall
Or rise Death's balances.

Thus it was with some, at least,
Who sat with eyes toward the east,
Watching the foe, whose forms were seen
Peering the green leaves between,
Just across Melsingay—
The little brook, whose tinkling sound
Alone disturbed the hush profound—
Silence else unbroken.

Opeechee and the other maiden
In a coppice near were hidden
By their thoughtful lovers,
And could not see, yet felt not less
The over-tensive strain and stress,
And were sorely weeping,

Opeechee most, who well indeed
Believed this strife more than its meed
Of rue and woe would bring her.
And so bewailing her sad fate,
Thus murmured to her trembling mate :
“ Oh! that I my sire could see
Without jeopardizing, he
To whom my soul is clinging
Like the tendrils of the vine
Which the sturdy oak doth twine
To its topmost branches,
And urge him that Opeechee's life
Were but a waste of little space
If she be not Annawan's wife,
The one alone whose lodge she'd grace.
Yet, O! my father, too, hath need
Of Opeechee's hand, indeed,
To spread his robes of buffalo,
When to sleep he'd weary go,
Toil and strife forgetting.

“ Was ever there a fate so hard—
Was ever maid so placed between
Two contending duties, barred

By duty sought and duty seen?
Must I—?" but the sentence perished
Ere the speech her thought had cherished
By her lips was spoken,
And instead her lips grew pale,
Parting in a stifled wail,
As cries a bird into whose heart
The hunter wings the cruel dart
From his bow unerring;
For at that moment through the dell
Sounded that familiar yell
Her sad heart knew but too well
Was the carnage signal;
Succeeded by the twang of bows,
Whizzing arrows, sounds of blows,
Shrieks and groans, and screams and curses,
Sick'ning thuds and singing cresses.
Hand to hand and head to shoulder,
Over log and bush and boulder,
On the brink and in the water,
All the same, carnage and slaughter;
Fiends incarnate, devils straining
For the mast'ry, neither gaining;
Glancing hatchets, sparks a-flying,

Forms death-locked, writhing, dying;
Blood and brain and scalp-locks mingled,
As if this of all were singled
For the bloodiest battle ever
Fought on land, or lake, or river.

Till now the conflict equal seemed,
And passive lookers-on had deemed
The chances of final success
To turn as likely on a guess
As on a given cause.

The few remaining of the band
Led by the dauntless Reckwa's hand
Seemed fresh and fierce as at the first,
And as unquenchable their thirst
For the Ojibways' blood.

While the Ojibways fiercer fought,
As if each lusty warrior thought
Results devolved on him.

Staggering at last, dismayed,
Reckwa's braves fell back, essayed
To come again, when with a yell
Annawan's warriors on them fell,
Whereon they quickly fled,

All save Reckwa, who valiant stood,
Staunching with his hand the blood
From a wound upon his breast,
While he Annawan thus addressed :
“Why didst thou stay the villain’s blade,
Lift in menace where I laid?
Didst hope by such device to gain
Forgiveness for the loss and pain
I’ve suffered by thy wiles?
Know then such hope, if such it were
That made thy hand to interfere,
Is vain as is that to elude
My vengeance, nourished by the feud
Which hath through generations last,
Not less than for the sorrow cast
Upon a father’s heart !

“Hark you, coward ! though I die
By thy warriors’ hands, or by
Thine own, I will avenge the wrong
I have suffered, waiting long—
Impatiently—this hour !”
Saying which, with one mad bound
He snatched a hatchet from the ground,

And hurled it full at Annawan,
Who, swerving, threw himself upon
And held the frenzied man.
And holding him thus firmly, he
Bade some one go for Opeechee,
And while his brother sought the maid
Annawan to the old man said :

“Opeechee’s sire ! know that my hands
Hold thee not thus now in fear
Of thine, or those of any man’s ;
But that thy daughter is so dear,
I’d fain make peace with one she loves,
Not less than him with whom she roves,
And love him for her sake.
And if you doubt the valor of
The warrior who hath won her love,
Two at a time of thy young braves
I’ll meet in combat, till the waves
Of yonder brooklet stain the shore
With the crimson of their gore ;
But not against her sire will I
Lift my hands, e’en though I die ;
For better she should mourn me dead,

Than, loathing, turn from me in dread,
Should I her father slay.

Thou hast no cause to cherish hate
Against thy daughter's chosen mate,
Nor to prolong the hated feud
Which our ancestors' hands imbued
With many a crimson stain ;

'T was not through grudge or feeling ill
That mine thy braves were led to kill,
But to protect our lives we fought,
When ye here in our covert sought
Us in thy mad revenge ;
Nor yet to pay a fancied wrong,
Conceived in feuds, beginning long
Before Annawan's time,
That he thy daughter sought and won,
Nor with a view to bring upon
Reckwa woe and sorrow.

“ Far be it from this heart of mine
To blight or injure thee or thine,
Or cause thee grief or rue.
To her alone belongs the blame,
If blame there be, or rue or shame ;

For had thy daughter been less fair,
Or less her power to ensnare,
I had not stolen her ;
But had left her in thy care,
To make thy lodge, and to prepare
And do the things a woman's hands
Only can prepare for man's
Comfort and solace.

“Aged thou art, and creased thy brow,
And thy lodge is lonely now,
With no daughter there to cheer
Or prepare thy haunch of deer.
Come thou, sire, forego thy hate,
Thou hast no cause for feud so great,
And be at peace with Annawan,
Who unto thee would be a son.
And if thou with him wouldst dwell
He would love and treat thee well ;
And when thine eye with age grows dim,
And thy body frail,
Thou canst lean thy weight on him,
And his thine eyes should be.”

Though long indeed Annawan spoke,
Reckwa nor stirred or silence broke,
But looked impassive on the ground,
His left hand pressing still the wound,
From which the blood yet flowed ;
Though softer lines lay on his cheek,
And a soft light illumines his eyes,
When Opeechee toward him flies
And flings her arms about his neck,
Kissing and stroking brow and cheek,
In that glad, warm-hearted way
Youth is wont love to display.

Yet not till she had thus awhile
Clung to him, a happy smile
Through her tears a-beaming,
Did she note his crimson'd breast,
Or the wound his hand still pressed,
As if to hide a shame,
When, woman-like, she starts in dread,
But quick recovers, and his head,
As he reclines, takes on her breast,
While tenderly Annawan dressed
And soothed the ugly wound.

The sweet-gum tree the balm supplied,
Mulberry bark the strip that tied
And bound it to its place.

And then, in soft, persuasive tone,
Opeechee led her father on
To mild converse and gentler mood,
Till, given more to peace than blood,
He sought Annawan's lodge with her,
And rested on the robes of fur
Her loving hands spread down.
With dext'rous grace a bit of deer,
And other such like simple cheer,
She soon prepared—before him sate,
And stood beside him while he ate.

Just as the light repast was o'er
Annawan's form darkened the door,
And stood with calm, respectful mien
In contemplation of the scene,
Whereon Reckwa at once arose,
Assumed a manly, kingly pose,
And thus addressed the youth :
"Annawan! know thou that the hate
I cherished toward thee, by fate,

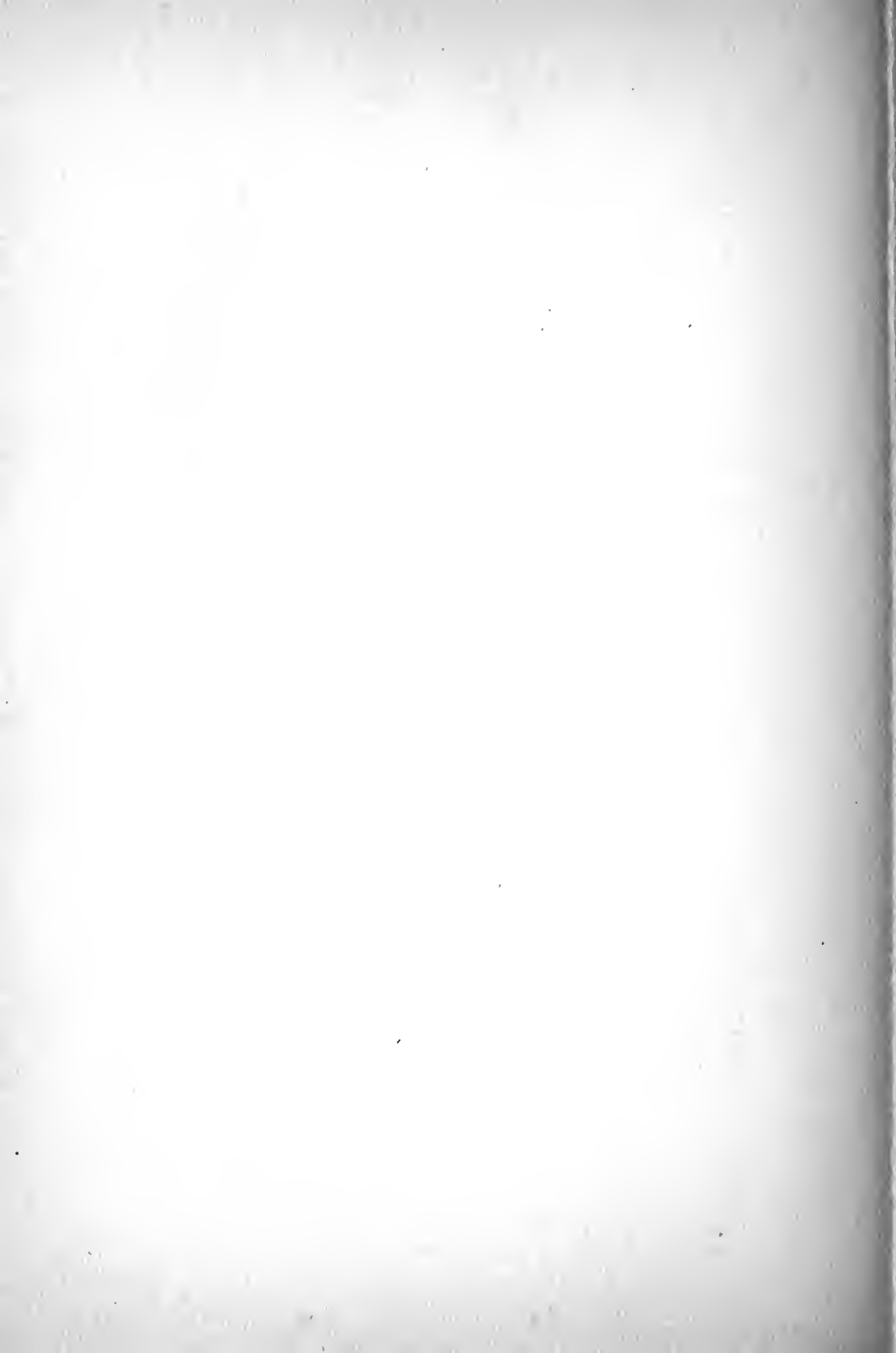
Less than thy kindness, clothed
In fitting garb, is somewhat soothed,
But not extinguished all.
Still smoulders there a spark, a breath
Would fan to life; what saith
Annawan—shall the spark go out,
And trustfulness prevail, or doubt?
It is for thee to say.

“The aged dread not death, but want,
And its accruing ills, which gaunt
And gnawing hunger brings. ’T is such
Thy proffered care precludes, and much
It weighs in Reckwa’s heart.
Yet I can not at once avail
Myself of comforts you’d entail,
Unless thou and Opeechee will
Return with me, my lodge to fill.
And why not so? The land is fair,
And ye—we all—could prosper there
Till time with us were done.”

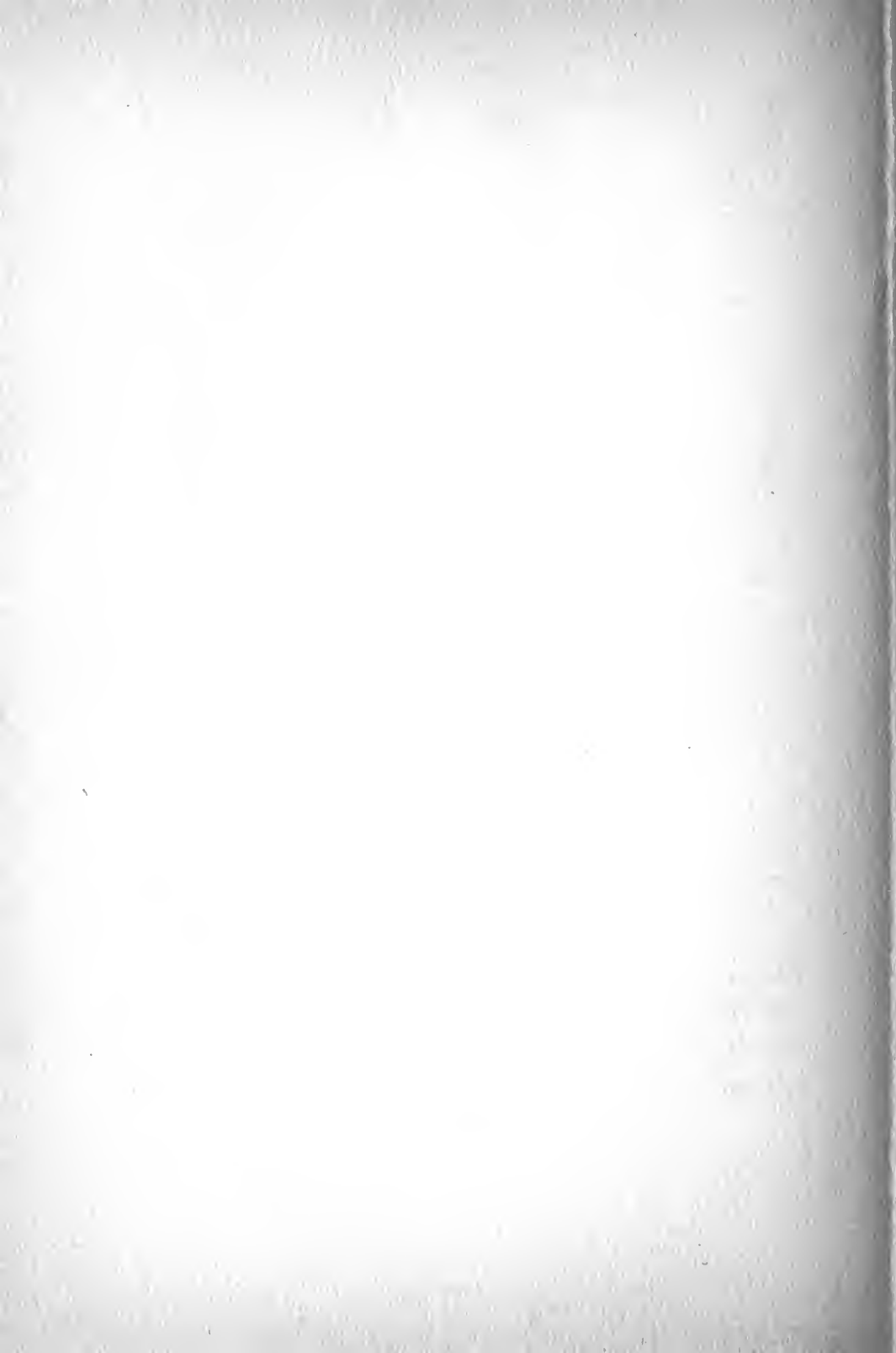
Thus peace descended on the flame,
Extinguished it, nor rue or shame
Touched the happy hearts again.

And thus and so the story ends,
And truth a glow to romance lends,
For truth it is that they return
Unto the land where first we learn
Of their love and romance.

Yea, such the romance, such the love,
Such the baleful hate which drove
Old Reckwa to pursue—
Such the conflict, such the sequel,
Such the carnage without equal,
If length of time, strength, and numbers,
And the dead the wild encumbers,
Count for any thing.



OTHER POEMS.



OTHER POEMS.

MEMENTOES.

THESE were her pictures—she loved them all,
But that one most on the easel there ;
And that little etching, there on the wall,
She prized as a gift ; and this is the chair
She most preferred, because, as she said,
It was a present to her from me ;
And this is the very last book she read,
And here is a passage she marked, you see.
That mounted cabinet, there on the stand,
Was taken a month before she died ;
These are the flowers you see in her hand—
This bunch of Niel-roses, now withered and dried.
Here is a pansy blossom she placed
Between the leaves of Lucile one day,
And here on the margin, in pencil traced :
“Cease not to think of me, love, alway.”

A FUNERAL NOTICE.

SOME day one of these will lie in the hand
Of each of my friends, when I am dead,
And they'll gather around my bier, and stand
With saddened heart and bowed head—
When I am dead.

Some day (and I sigh, and wonder when
The summons will come for me to go),
My hands will lie on my breast, and men
Will speak of me in whispers low—
When I am dead.

Some day they will gather around my bier,
And cover it o'er with flowers, may be;
I wonder if any will then be near
To weep, as a wife, or a child, for me—
When I am dead?

For often I think (and shudder), may be
The summons will come to me when I
Am far away from the loved ones we
Poor mortals want 'round us when we die,
And when we're dead.

Yes! some day, out from a darkened room
To a hearse that waits outside somewhere,
They'll carry me—to the gruesome tomb,
Wherein they'll lower and cover me there—
When I am dead!

MY JEWELS.

ENDOWED with a blessing that crowns every
minute,

A wife and a home, with sweet children in it,
Whose innocent prattle each moment beguiles,
I ask nothing more to temper my trials.

Who would ask more is not worthy the wife,
Whose sweet, gentle nature gives zest to his life;
Not worthy the children whose fountains of mirth
Are to the soul as the dews to the earth.

Thus blessed, dearest Father, I ask nothing more,
Only thy blessings henceforth as before,
Thy guardianship over these loved ones of mine,
And that we all enter that mansion of thine.

PERSEVERANCE.

WHO dares and does with an honest aim
Will gain the end for which he strives;
He never fails of a place, I claim,
Who takes the lines himself and drives.

Defeat is the price of a slothful gait;
A laggard was never known to win,
And a winner was never known to wait
Till the hindmost horse got in.

They rise, who press on, bit by bit,
From a lowly place in the ranks of life
To a grand up-plain, where only sit
Those who've conquered by earnest strife.

To such I doff my hat and say:
"God speed thee on to a higher place;
What they have attained the poorest may,
If they but press on in the race."

For an earnest heart and a willing hand,
With an honest aim, will carry us through
To the loftiest place there is in the land,
If we will only dare and do.

THE LONE BIRD.

NOTE how subdued the thrush's song!

No riotous roundelay she sings,
As on the maple bough she swings,
Her heart as sad as autumn time—

Her heart as sad as autumn time,
While sorrow quavers in each note
That trembles from her little throat,
As near the empty nest she sings—

As near the empty nest she sings
And mourns the scattered brood to-day,
The little ones that flew away
Ere autumn leaves began to fall—

Ere autumn leaves began to fall,
She had a mate to share her grief,
But this solace was very brief—
For he, likewise, is gone.

And, bird-like, many souls are sad,
And almost broken-hearted;
They, too, sing of the departed,
Till sometimes they go mad!

SONGS OF THE HEART.

A CHANGEFUL song is that of the heart's,
Sung in a measureless strain;
Each stanza in some memory starts
And ends in a quiver of pain.

It sings its song in the silent night,
Or the shadow of the wood;
It is not a song that one can write,
And but little understood.

There is always a cadence of regret,
That sinks to an undertone,
Then quavers and dies in a sigh that's set
To a music of its own.

It runs in a quav'ring, liquid strain,
As if flowing over tears,
For the heart is going back again
To the scenes of other years.

The bright green fields and limpid streams
Are revisited and crossed,
Which, remembered only now as dreams,
To the heart are never lost.

Beside the graves of its early dead,
Love's young dreams and other things,
It drops a tear, where the first was shed,
Where began the song it sings.

A WINTER MORNING.

THE morn is cold, the snow is falling,
The farmer out at the barn is calling
His cattle and swine from the neighb'ring hills:
"S-o-o-ky! S-o-o-ky! S-o-o-k! S-o-o-k! Sook!"

In the strangest way my heart it thrills,
And wanders back to the dear old days—
To the dear old farm and its simple ways—
To one who stood in the blinding snow—
Stood and called, till a muffled low
Came down from the shelt'ring hills:
"M-o-o! Moo! Moo! Moo!"

And so I muse as memory wills—
Muse, as the farmer's voice falls
On my ears, as he quaintly calls:
"S-o-o-ky! Sook! Sook! Pig-o-o-ey! P-i-i-gy! P-i-i-gy!"

THE EAGLE AND CHILD.

AN eagle, perched on his eyrie high,
Scanned the vale with piercing eye,
And far below on the jutting stones
Espied an infant's bleaching bones.

"I tore the quivering flesh," she screamed,
"From yonder fragile form,
And bathed my beak in the blood that streamed
From the heart still pulsing warm.

"I heeded not its feeble cry,
Or the mother's shriek of wild despair,
As I bore it up to my eyrie high,
To my eaglets hung'ring there.

"I plucked its tender eye-balls out
And fed them to my young,
Unmindful of the frantic shout
Which through the valley rung.

"Bit by bit the flesh I tore
From its tender, dimpled cheek,
And deeply in its warm heart's core
I plunged my dripping beak.

“Once its feeble fingers clutched
My talons in its side,
But not for long, for ere we touched
My eyrie here it died.”

FOUR-LEAF CLOVER.

WE sat beneath the apple tree,
Hunting four-leaf clover;
The leaves they sifted sun-specks down
And sprinkled us all over.

And when she found a tiny stem
With four small leaves upon it,
I wish you could have seen the eyes
I saw beneath that bonnet.

They laughed and danced and sparkled so,
They set love's darts a-going;
From hunting four-leaf clover, then,
I went straightway to wooing.

But now the apple boughs are bare,
And snow-birds in them hover,
And she is sleeping 'neath the sod,
Where last year grew the clover.

THE WHIPPOWIL.

BIRD of the dark and lonely night,
Bird of the doleful song,
Whose plaint is hushed at dawn of light
And silent all day long,

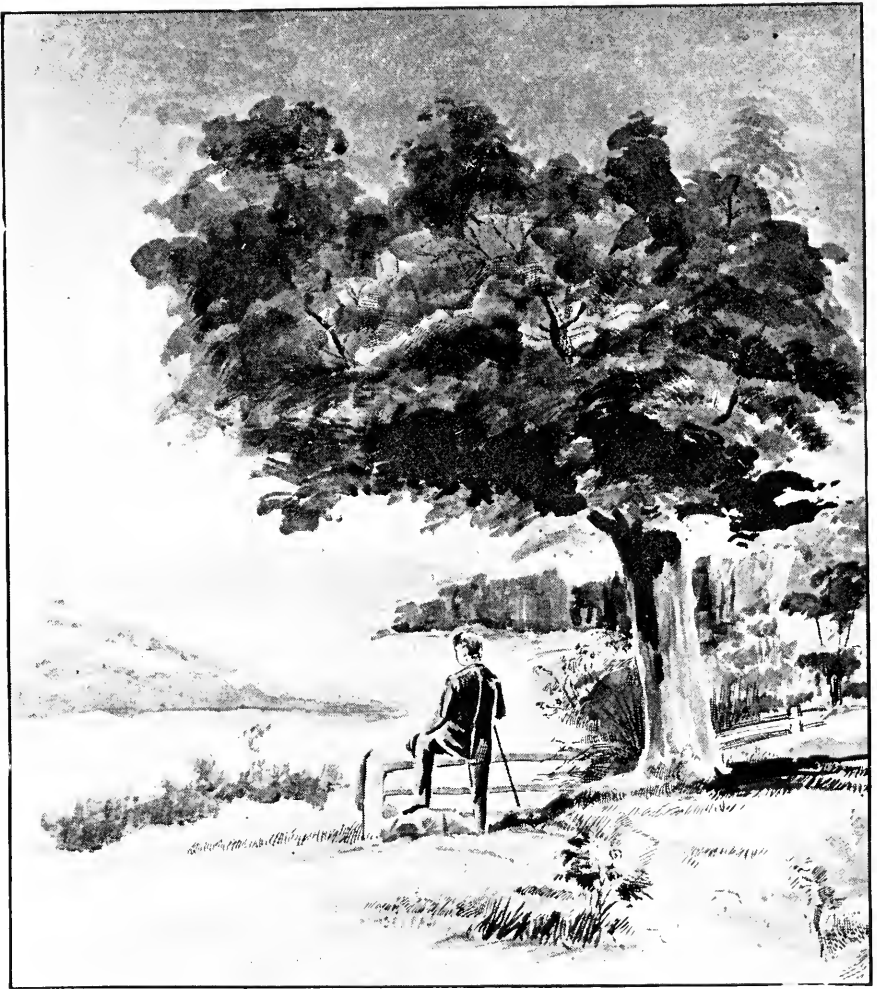
Tell me on what wild, lonely moor
Thy mournful lay first broke—
If this or some far distant shore
First to thy piping woke?

From lonely fell and coppice green
Nightly comes thy lay,
Soon as the twinkling star is seen
Where shone the king of day.

Weird and wild is the refrain
Of thy changeless "Whippowil,"
Whose querulous, quav'ring strain
Breaks on the midnight still.

Back, strange bird! to the lonely wood,
Nor come thou near my sill;
Thou art no harbinger of good,
Thy presence bodeth ill.*

*A superstition prevails among the mountain people that if one of these birds lights on the window or door sill and sings it is a sign of a death in the family.



“Back to the haw-tree, late in the gloaming,
Back to the haw-tree’s shade,
After weary, dreary years of roaming,
His aimless feet have strayed.”

Page 117.



UNDER THE HAW-TREE.

BACK to the haw-tree, late in the gloaming,
Back to the haw-tree's shade,
After weary, dreary years of roaming,
His aimless feet have strayed ;
While in his heart is ever ringing—
Ringing the sweet song she was singing
Under the haw-tree, down in the glade,
Under the haw-tree's shade.

And while the scent of the sweet wild roses
Drifts on the ev'ning air,
Beneath the haw-tree he reposes
And dreams of his lost Lenare ;
For in his heart is still echoing
The low, sweet answers to his wooing
Under the haw-tree, down in the glade,
Under the haw-tree's shade.

Ah ! the lonely, weary years of sighing,
The sad mistake he made—
The going away when she was dying,
The coming long delayed—
The plaintive echoes ever straying
Through his heart's chambers, ever saying
“ Remember the haw-tree, down in the glade,
Remember the haw-tree's shade ! ”

TO AN UNKNOWN FLOWER.

PALE flower of this lonely wood,
Fair exile from some distant shore,
Canst answer me in what fair clime
Thy parent stem first blossom bore?

Say, did some transient songster bear
Thee in his beak from tropic fields,
And leave thee by this lonely pass,
Where this wild creeper 'round thee steals?

Thy petals, of a crimson tone,
Seem to have lost their deeper hue,
And, drooping low, thy slender stem
Is perishing for want of dew.

I do not know thy history,
Perhaps thy genus is unknown,
But I will take and plant thee out
Where my own fav'rite buds are grown.

And there, amidst those favored ones
That beautify my cottage home,
Thy petals pale shall glow again,
And yield a far richer perfume.

And knowing ones will pause and say
Thou art an old, familiar friend,
And (guessing at thy origin)
Give to thee kindred without end.

A WREATH OF AUTUMN LEAVES.

I 'LL weave thee a wreath of autumn leaves,
Of purple, gold, and crimson hues ;
Nor wonder if the hand that weaves,
Should serve alternately the muse.

Some I take from the sparkling stream
As adown its current riding,
They, hurrying on and onward, seem
Forever from me gliding.

Some come wafted on the breeze,
And, settling down a-nigh me,
Are woven in, while neighboring trees
Whate'er I lack supply me.

And now the wreath, but poorly done,
I lay aside for lack of time,
And the verses, too, are scarce begun
Ere they must end for lack of rhyme.

A DREAM.

THERE'S nothing in a dream, you say?
If this were so—

Why have I been so sad all day,
I'd like to know ;

Or started so often to mine eyes
Those bitter tears,
As arose long-buried memories
Of other years?

We strayed beside a brook—my love and I,
Just where of old
We used ; where with deep fervency
My love I told.

And the same flush that dyed her cheek
On that May eve
Suffused it now ; and, though she did not speak,
I did perceive

It pleased her well. O, rapturous thought !
Man's earliest dream !

A woman's love, an assurance fraught
With bliss supreme.

A moment I held her to my breast,
 One—only one ;
Once, only once her lips I pressed,
 And she was gone.

A while in blissful trance I stood,
 And when I woke,
Pale Luna's beams illumed the wood
 And kissed the brook,

Bright in whose depths the Ev'ning Star,
 Reflected, gleamed,
Though less tranquil here by far
 Than there it seemed.

How swiftly by the time had flown !
 Though 'tis always so
When lovers meet—the hour is gone
 Before they know.

We had met here many times before—
 'T was our lover's tryst,
And in my dreams, as once of yore,
 Her lips I kissed.

A while, a little while, and I awoke,
How long I lay
There weeping e'er this bright vision broke,
I can not say ;
I only know the same dull, heavy pain
That filled my heart
The day she died is there to-day again,
And won't depart.

ASHES OF HOPE.

THE threads of life are snapping,
And dropping, while we weave;
The dearest memories left us
Are those our dead hopes leave.
The fruits of life are falling,
Some dying in the bloom ;
The sweetest scented flowers,
Dead roses' faint perfume.
The things in life we cherish
Are those we soonest lose ;
The dearest blessings vouched us
Are those we most abuse.

AN AUTUMN MORN.

WHAT sooner wakes the sleeping Muse,
Or fills the soul with bliss,
Than such a picture to peruse,
On such a morn as this?

The distant hills, but dimly seen
Beneath their veil of purple haze,
Have doff'd their hues of summer green
For tints befitting autumn days.

The tortuous stream that finds its way
Adown the narrow, winding vale,
Will ne'er reflect a lovelier day,
Nor did a lovelier e'er prevail.

The year's decease the signs presage,
The sad'ning signs to Autumn given,
The circling leaf, mature with age,
From its native bough is driven.

The thistledown, which lightly skims
Across the sward of greenish brown,
Falls where yonder beechen limbs
Drop their heavy burden down.

AN IDYL.

HERE on the fair Elk's bonny banks,
Where happy childhood had its sway,
I'm sitting dreamily to-day.

The fish are sporting on the shoals,
And birds are caroling on high,
Just as I've heard in days gone by.

The ugly water-moccasin
Is stretched at length upon the drift,
Too lazy quite his head to lift.

The turtle seeks a sunny place,
And sticks his head above the wave,
For light and air all creatures crave.

A minnow skips from waters deep,
And drops into a shallow place,
To escape the bass in chase.

Here on the sand some butterflies,
With many-colored, gauzy wing,
Are feasting on some dainty (?) thing.

A kingfisher, skimming along,
Plucks a minnow from the shoal,
And flies across into his hole.

(To some, perhaps, it is not known
These feathered creatures burrow, too,
The same as many quadrup's do;

Oft in the river bank you 'll see
A hole, wherein these birds reside,
And where they go their prey to hide.)

A "sucker," nibbling at a log,
Anon displays his belly white,
Yielding the shaded waters light.

A muskrat, swimming o'er the creek,
Glances up, and seeing me,
Goes to the bottom instantly.

'Tis middle of the afternoon;
The kine, emerging from the shade,
Begin to browse along the glade.

'Tis even later, and I hear
The grunting of the lazy swine,
Following up the browsing kine.

And now 'tis dusk, and katydid
Is singing merrily overhead,
Just as I've heard in days long fled.

These things and more I see and hear,
As I return along the hill,
Where weirdly sings the whippowil.

TWILIGHT—A SONNET.

O GENTLE, witching twilight hour !
Of which the first sweet poets sung,
To which my harp is likewise strung,
How sweetly solemn is thy power !
Who art 'twixt day and night so hung,
Thou hast of each an equal dower
Of light and shade, while each rare flower
Its fragrance on thy breath hath flung.
And wheresoe'er in thee we turn
Each sense some sure delight doth find ;
Agèd and bruised hearts, that yearn
For some dear loved one left behind,
Much fonder and more tender grow,
Watching thee, twilight, come and go.

LINES IN AN ALBUM.

THY album, D——, before me lies,
And many autographs I see,
But none amongst them one could prize
For its originality.

Some quote a greater poet's rhymes,
Another pleads, "Remember me,"
"Forget me not," another chimes,
"And I'll remember thee."

THE SABBATH BELLS.

RING out, old bells; thy resonant tones
Fall on the ears of all to-day,
Tearing some with rending moans,
Stirring some in the strangest way;
With sadness, gladness all hearts swell
Under the sound of the dear old bell.

Many a cheek is bathed in tears,
Many a prayer in the heart upsprings,
For the lost and loved of other years,
Or the tidings of hope it brings;
All are rapt in a glad, sad spell
Under the sound of the dear old bell.

MOODS.

OUT of darkness bring me a wail
From a horror-haunted soul,
Till curdles my blood and blanches pale
My heart as an unwrit scroll;
Shrill and clear,
On the midnight air,
Out of darkness bring me a wail !
Out of silence bring me a sound
Voicing agony's thrall—
A moan or groan of grief profound,
And steeped in torture's gall—
Vibrant of
Hearts rent and clove,
Out of silence bring me a sound !
Out of twilight bring me a prayer
From a heart that wavers between
A gleam of hope and a wild despair,
And the fathomless unseen ;
Earnest and wild
As the fright of a child,
Out of twilight bring me a prayer !

Out of Lethe bring to my heart
Some strain of long ago—
Some memory of youth a part,
Untouched by guile or woe—
Something meet,
Tender and sweet,
Out of Lethe bring to my heart !

Out of the shadows soft and dim
Bring me the sound of tears,
The broken fragments of a hymn
Back from the vanished years—
Soft and low,
And sad and slow,
Out of the shadows soft and dim !

THE DOLL'S DRESS.

I FOUND this garment here to-day,
Moth-marked, and in some places molded ;
God bless the hands that folded it away,
The little hands themselves now folded.

THE MAIDEN'S HINT.

I MET my love by the merest chance
Where two paths came together,
Where the leaves hung red in the sun's soft glance,
Of the mild October weather ;
And she would have passed, but I barred her way,
And clasped her hand and bade her stay
And hear what her lover had to say.

With a downward glance and a feeble show
To withdraw her hand from mine, she said :
“ 'Tis late, and the sun is sinking low,
And the path I have to tread
Lies over the hills and the woodlands through,
And will soon be wet with the evening dew,
And I dare not tarry to list to you.

“ 'Tis a lonely way when the day grows dim,
And the twilight shadows lower,
And the fireflies render the dusk forms grim,
As they gyre and circle o'er
The path where through the woodland it goes,
And the lonely spell o'er one it throws—
Only the heart of a maiden knows.

"Ah yes," she sighed, as again she tried
To withdraw her hand from mine:
"Tis a lonely way in the eventide,
So please release my hand from thine,
And let me pass ere the sun descends,
And the evening shade with the twilight blends,
And day in the dusky darkness ends."
Could a bashful swain have asked for more,
Or a maid more modest been?
So I took her arm as her glance fell lower,
And together we started then;
And the path was bright and short instead,
And many the pleasant things were said,
As along the winding way we sped.

DEAD HOPES.

THROUGH a mist of tears to the vanished years,
I gaze with a hopeless longing,
And open my arms to the beautiful forms
Down memory's vista thronging.
But the shadowy forms evade my arms,
Which close on the empty air;
However, it seems they are but dreams,
There is no substance there.

THE COQUETTE.

WHY, Cupid! thou silly little dunce!
Why didst thou give to her thy bow?
The minx! if she has strung it once,
She has a thousand times, I know.

Pursue and take it from her now,
And do thou not the like again,
As hang thy bow on beauty's brow,
Who points her arrows all with pain.

LOST LEOLINE.

OH! bitter the day and cold,
Oh! stormy the night and long,
When my lost love, my Leoline,
Went down in the billows strong.

Oh! why should thy waves return
To thy bosom again, O sea!
When my lost love, my Leoline,
Can never come back to me?

AKKEEWASSA'S DAUGHTER.

(AN INDIAN LEGEND.)

A KKEEWASSA was a warrior,
Of his prowess proud, and prestige ;
Visionless, but vain and vauntful
Of the homage all accorded
The intrepid Akkeewassa.

Akkeewassa's only daughter,
Famous for her favored features,
And her form's enchanting graces,
Was designed by Akkeewassa
For some chief of rare distinction,
Who could boast of deeds of valor
Equaling his, or greater.
But when she'd repelled each proffer
From the chiefs of tribes adjacent,
Then his anger knew no limit,
And he questioned her for reasons
Why his wishes were not heeded,
When she, strong in that sweet, holy
Passion maidens cherish, boldly

Answered him her heart already
Was in keeping of a hunter
In the tribe whereof the ruler
Was her father—Akkeewassa.

Akkeewassa, then no longer
Able to restrain his anger,
Had the hunter brought before him,
And, in tones of rising choler,
Thus denounced the lowly hunter,
Who had dared to woo the daughter
Of the valiant Akkeewassa :

“Dastard! who art thou, whose totem
Is the ignominious fisher’s,
That you dare to hope and cherish
Thoughts above thy lowly station?
Think’st thou that Akkeewassa
Would not sooner see his daughter
Pinioned to the stake of torture,
Or enrobed for her sepulture,
Than the wife of Wanawasha?
Know you not that warriors worthy
Of the praise of Akkeewassa,
From adjacent tribes have journeyed

Hither, hoping to entangle
In true love's enthralling meshes
The proud heart of Opeeleea?

“ Were the ravenous brown eagle,
Or the carcajou thy totem,
And thy flesh bore marks of torture,
Welcomed and endured unflinching,
And thy lodge pole well were laden
With scalp-locks in battle taken,
Then, perhaps, thy lowly lin'age
I might overlook, and sanction
Thy alliance with my daughter ;
But if thou, whose weak ancestry
Gives no promise of achievements
In the chase or on the war-path,
Still endeavor to beguile her,
And, by artifice and fiction,
Dost her happiness endanger,
By more hopelessly ensnaring
Her in love's enslaving meshes,
Then beware ! lest Akkeewassa
Make thee food for wolves and vultures.
Only such can claim alliance

With the house of Akkeewassa
As have won a name in battle."

Pale and trembling with the effort
To restrain the deep resentment
Rising from rebuke so trenchant,
Wanawasha thus made answer :

" Akkeewassa's tongue is livid
With the scathing heat of passion,
And his words, chagrin envenomed,
Reek with slander's noisome odor ;
Yet are harmless and impotent
As the twitter of the sparrow,
Flitting midst the swaying branches,
When the surreptitious youngster
Hath purloined its helpless fledgeling.

" Wanawasha is no coward,
And his lin'age is not lacking
Of ennobling deeds of daring.
In his time, as Akkeewassa
Must remember, no incursions,
Or attacks to be resisted,
Opportunity's afforded
To arouse the sleeping forces—

Strength and courage, skill and prowess—
Attributes of Wanawasha.

“ Swift the hawk’s descent—unerring
In its aim—and so my arrows ;
Deadly is the serpent’s venom,—
So are Wanawasha’s cresses ;
Crafty is the fox and speedy,
And so also’s Wanawasha ;
Keen the wary panther’s scent is,—
So likewise is Wanawasha’s ;
Fierce the carcajou and agile,—
So also is Wanawasha ;
Terror-fraught the muckwa’s growl is,—
So is Wanawasha’s war cry,
And lest his thine own shall rival,
Guard thy prestige, Akkeewassa ! ”
With which speech young Wanawasha
Proudly turned from Akkeewassa,
Bent upon some deed of daring
That should win him praise and plaudits.

Seeking out the younger warriors,
His intentions he imparted,
Whereupon they all agreed to
Join him in the expedition.

Arrows tipped with flint or jasper,
Each one carried in his quiver,
While each muskeemoot with pounded
Corn was filled, and sweet pemmican.
Thus equipped, and each one painted
In the manner of his fancy,
And adorned with eagle feathers,
On a grassy plain at even,
'Round a blasted, solitary
Pine, appointed for the orgies
Of the war-dance, they assembled,
Where a fire was quickly kindled,
Backward from whose rays the shadows—
Murky waves of dusky darkness—
Fled into the inky blackness,
While the yellow flames, entwining
The rich faggots, resin coated,
Seemed so many serpents, writhing.

Wanawasha, now their leader,
Quickly strode into the center
Of the bright illumined circle
And began a melancholy
Chant, the while the tree he compassed.

First of his own expectations
Did he sing, and then recounted
Warlike deeds of his ancestors,
And when he'd the theme exhausted
Struck the post and others followed,
Till each in his turn had boasted
All the feats of self or father;
Then a war-whoop, loud and fearful,
Clove the else unbroken silence,
And the war-dance, wild and frantic,
Was begun and long continued;
And when the weird orgies ended,
To the rendezvous appointed
On the borders of the nation
They'd selected for invasion,
Each by his own way departed,
And no braver party ever
Rallied for conquest and glory
Than the fearless Chippewayans
Of the band of Wanawasha.

Wanawasha sought the maiden,
Ere the expedition started,
And confidingly imparted

His intentions and the motive.
But, her tender heart misgiving
Her the mission of her lover,
She, by artful, soft persuasions,
Sought to overcome his purpose.

“Wanawasha needs no glory
Other than the fates accord him,
To insure him the devotion
Of his trusting Opeelesa,”
Answered Opeelesa softly.

“Opeelesa's heart is darkened
With the shadow of forebodings,
Which thy tenderest assurance
Can not banish, Wanawasha;
For, now I recall the omen,
Yester-even from the coppice
Sang the we-ko-lis more sadly
Than before hath ever fallen
On the ears of Opeelesa,
And my heart grew strangely tender
In its thoughts of Wanawasha.

“Then as softly came a shadow,
As of some approaching sorrow,

And my soul grew all a-tremble
With the dread which came upon me,
And I fear it was the presage
Of some dire, impending evil
That's to sever Wanawasha
Evermore from Opeelesa,
And my heart is well-nigh breaking
As the import of this omen
Bears on it with clearer meaning
In the light of thy mad purpose.

"Love or glory — which were sweetest? —
One you leave to seek the other;
Death or glory wait thee yonder —
Death you risk in quest of glory.
If 't is death, then Opeelesa
Must heartbroken mourn thee ever;
If 't is fame, yet Opeelesa
Could not love thee more or better."

"Not for fame, for fame's sake only,
Hazard I my life, your pleasure,"
Answered Wanawasha proudly,
"But to prove the imputation
Of effeminacy, uttered

Of me by thy irate father,
Is unjust, false, and malicious,
And until I have disproved it
I could not feel myself worthy
Of the love of Opeelesa,
And I shall the foray hazard,
Though my dreams were unpropitious."

Then with many protestations
Of inviolate attachment,
The devoted lovers parted,
To meet here no more forever ;
For although the youthful warrior
Led his party on to vict'ry,
And succeeded in securing
Many scalp-locks (valued trophies),
At the very last an arrow
From some laggard of the vanquished
Pierced his heart, and he sank dying.

From the moment that the om'nous
Death howl came to Opeelesa,
No smile lit her face forever ;
Tears and sighs and lamentations
Were thence forward her companions ;

Every effort to amuse her
Or restore her wonted spirits
Futile was and unavailing.

Wand'ring aimlessly, or seated
In some shady nook, secluded
From the morbid's observation,
Tenderly she sang and sweetly
To the spirit of her lover,
Which she fancied hovered near her
In the image of a robin
Perched among the boughs above her.

Of the song a fragment only
Grim Forgetfulness evaded,
To be sung by hapless maidens
Of her own and other nations.
Tender were the words and touching,
But the strain to which she chanted
Them with sweetest intonation
Sadder was and more pathetic,
And, although the words are given,
The melodious strain is lacking.

OPEELEESA'S SONG.

"Sweet spirit of my lover,
Whatever stress betide,
Forever near me hover,
A-near me, love, abide.

"I will not break thy quiet,
If thou wilt linger near,
And other birds their riot
Will cease thy song to hear.

"And when death shall have broken
The bondage love would rend,
Be this devotion's token—
To thee I will commend

"My soul for its transition
To the heavenly isle,
And, with true love's submission,
Thy blessed soul beguile."

Thus her plaintive song she daily
Chanted to the robin sitting
On the swaying boughs above her,

Listening as if the import
Of her song were comprehended;
While her fond imagination
Led her to the vain conclusion
That it was her lover truly,
In the image of the robin.

Akkeewassa, no less broken
Now in spirit than his daughter,
Oft endeavored to beguile her,
But in vain, her heart was breaking,
And from day to day she slowly
Pined away, and when the summer
Time had fled, and snows prevented
Converse with the cherished robin,
Death, in mercy, came and took her,
And her father, long repentant,
Had her lover brought and buried
In a grave beside his daughter.

Thus ends the tale of Opeelesa,
Akkeewassa's only daughter.

YEARNINGS.

DOWN in the orchard a robin red-breast
Is gathering straws to build her a nest,
And when each delicate fiber has been
Carefully placed and well woven in,
She tucks her little head under her wing
And dreams of her nest and brood of last spring :
“ Such a dear little brood it was, to be sure,
And their absence is very hard to endure ;
Ah, me ! how I wish they 'd return,” chirped she,
“ And bide for a season with Robin and me.”

Out on the portico grandmother's sitting,
Winding her yarn for next winter's knitting,
Humming a soft little air as she winds,
Or pausing to ravel the tangles she finds ;
And when every thread is wound from the reel
She sighs, as some old memories steal
Over her thoughts from the dear dead past,
Till over her heart a shadow is cast :
“ Ah, me ! how I wish our boys,” said she,
“ Had tarried at home with Jamie and me.”

Down in the meadow a little white lamb
 Is skipping and frisking about his dam ;
 No worry hath he, and never a bother,
 When hungry he scampers away to his mother,
 Who, while he is sucking, patiently stands
 And gazes away o'er the meadow lands,
 Wondering now in a mournful way
 Where feeds the weanling that went astray :
 " Ah, me ! how I wish he was here," said she,
 " To sleep in the fold to-night with me."

TWILIGHT AND DUSK.

WHEN the shadows of night and the waning day
 In the gathering twilight meet,
 I love to kneel at their dusky feet,
 And list the tale so tender and sweet
 Each tells in a sober way.

Two lovers, two passionate lovers are they,
 Their wooing is tender and low,
 Tender, chaste, and pure as the snow ;
 Ah me ! but would n't I love to know
 What these pale lovers say.

MAGGIE, THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

WELL I remember the little old mill,
The miller and Maggie, his daughter ;
And the long chain of troughs that led down the hill,
Forming a shute for the water
That kept the old overshot wheel spinning round
Till the barley or corn in the hopper was ground.
The miller was old, but Maggie, blue-eyed,
Beautiful Maggie was spry,
And never a boy of us but would have died
For a smile or a glance of her eye,
And often, no doubt, she took double toll,
Confused by the admiring glances we stole.
And he of the boys, who, while his " turn " ground,
Got Maggie to play " fox and goose,"
(Where the red grain chases the white ones around),
Was the envied of all—the butt of abuse.
Her lips in a pucker, her brows knit in thought,
The fox must be sly if the goosie he caught.
But the old miller died long years ago ;
The mill is a dream of the past,
And Maggie, alone in her grief and her woe,
Pined slowly and followed at last ;

Yet the mill, the miller, and Maggie, I find
With all the sweet dreams of my youth are entwined.
For I dream of the quaint little overshot mill,
 The miller and Maggie, his daughter,
And the long chain of troughs that led down the hill,
 Forming a shute for the water
That kept the old ramshackled-wheel spinning round
Till the barley or corn in the hopper was ground.

THE BLIND MAN'S SOLILOQUY.

LIKE Milton, blind am I, and old ;
L Thou hast touched me with affliction's touch,
 Because I sinned overmuch,
Nor sought thy ways, more precious than gold ;
 But I am glad thou hast afflicted me,
 Since it hath brought me nearer unto thee.
For, being blind to earthly sight,
 I walk no more in folly's ways,
 And the remainder of my days
I'll serve Thee with a holy might ;
 A little ways up on thy hills I see
 Holy angels beckoning to me.

HARD LUCK.

I RISE to remark, in my humble way,
And in a few words to try to convey
To your minds the fact that I'm poor ;
And to ask some one to say, if he can,
How under Heaven is a friendless man
Ever on earth to tide o'er
The stream of misfortune that floods his path,
Or appease the temper of Fate, whose wrath
Is searing and scathing his soul,
Till it sometimes seems the heavens above
Have recalled their light and withdrawn their love,
And hidden the path to each goal.

'T was never my temper to sue or plead,
Or put up a story and ask for bread,
As the beggar is wont to do ;
Nor is it charity I ask, indeed,
As you shall see, if you will but heed
And follow my story through.

There are vaults, I know, in these goodly lands
That are bursting, 'most, with the gold the hands

Of the sordid few have stored
In their cavernous depths, to rust or wait
Till the time is ripe for a heavier rate
Of interest for their hoard.

And I ask myself, as I feel the stress
Of the ever-increasing hopelessness
That each barren effort brings:
Why it is, if there be a God above,
Who even takes note of the sparrow with love,
That He will allow such things—
Allow the many to suffer for bread,
Physic and raiment, while a feast is spread
Of the costliest dainties and wine
In the homes of those whose plethoric vaults
Dull conscience and sense to a thousand faults,
Allowing that He is benign?

Not until this glaring disparity
I saw, in the absence of charity,
And a lack of brotherly love,
Did I doubt the goodness of God, or feel
That he had n't a care for the poor man's weal,
As I fear these things must prove.
So, you see from what I have said, I go

A roundabout way in order to show
I should like a dif'rent deal;
And if I don't get it, then you may say
That I do not strive or work, but play,
Or follow the rod and reel.

MORNING—A SONNET.

BACK roll the curtains from the couch of Night,
When turns the gloomy god and disappears
Behind the horizon in the twilight
That chases dawn around the hemispheres;
But ere his pond'rous form is lost to sight,
The morning sylphs the veil of ebon tears
From his low'ring brow, when lo! Morning bright
Above the summit of the mountain peers.
Then, hark ye to all Nature's waking yawn,
When Slumber, wrapt in clouds of morning mists,
Descends the eastern slopes, where blushing Dawn
The dew-drops from his trembling eyelids kiss,
And, stooping, snatches from the sun a ray
And sends it quiv'ring up the solar way.

MEMORIES.

DO you ever dream of hours
That are buried with the past?
Do you ever scan the faces
That in memory are cast?
Do you ever hear the voices
That thrilled you long ago,
Like the music that goes pulsing
Through your senses to and fro?
Do you ever see the twinkle
Of an eye that beamed on you,
With the love-light ever gleaming
In its depths of brown or blue?
Do you ever hear the ripple
Of a laughter that is hushed,
Or feel again the bitter tears
From burning eyes that gushed?
If so, then thou hast realized
That memory alone
Can ever bring to thee again
The hours that have flown,
Or ever re-awaken
The griefs and joys known.

HOPES AND SMILES.

WHAT'S the use of hurrying,
And forever worrying?—

Life is but a span,
And at his own burying
Each will be, to a man.

Yet each seems bent on beating
The others all, and greeting
The undertaker first,
As if Time were not fleeting,
Humanity death-cursed.

This everlasting fretting
Or otherwise regretting
What we can not mend,
Time's ravages abetting
Is, you may well depend.

It never was intended
Life should be blent and blended
With regrets and sighs,
For, until time is ended,
Hope's promise never dies.

True, fortune's favor's fickle,
And oft there is a trickle
Of tears—a smile instead,
And tearful tunes may tickle
Some hearts, where others bleed.

THE WIFE'S QUERY.

IF thou, my precious one, were asked to-day,
What nearest fills the measure of thy heart,
Couldst thou look calmly in my eyes and say—
“Thou, dearest one, thou hast the greater part?”

If I should come upon thee unaware,
While somber care sits brooding on thy brow,
And for thy holiest thoughts lay kisses there,
Pray thee, O mine, how wouldst thou answer, now?

If I were laid upon a bed of pain,
And all thy wealth were lying by my side,
And fate should say “one only shall remain,”
Tell me, I pray, how then wouldst thou decide?

I would not give thy love a bitter test,
But O! dear one, I should so love to know
If thou of all things earthly love me best—
Because—ah, well! because I love thee so.

LOVE'S HAZARD.

I ASKED you in my simple way
"What is love?"—and you said:
"It is a game that some hearts play,
By man and woman played."

I seemed not, though, to understand;
Wherefore, to make it plain,
You said if I would take a hand,
Perhaps you could explain.

'T was thus the game began, and I—
I must be very dull;
For though I know, indeed, I try
To get the meaning full,

I can't, somehow, for thinking you
Have such seductive eyes,
And wondering what you would do
If you should win the prize.

You know you told me that the heart
Was always made the die,
And if we got an even start,
The game would be a tie.

It was n't fair—you had the best
Right from the beginning,
And though the game began in jest,
I'm now bent on winning.

And yet I know that you must win,
As I've but one in seven;
Though, if you're fair, you'll let's begin
The game over even.

And then—Oh, pshaw! I wish your eyes
Had been less alluring,
Oh that, since now you've won the prize,
You would cease demurring.

THE AFTER-GLOW.

ONE thing, at least, is plain to me—
The nobler truths of life are n't learned
Till the after-glow—till the taper we
Have followed so long to the socket's burned.

OLD-TIME APPLE PARIN'S.

I^N the otum, when the corn begins to ripin in the
ear,

An' the little Milum apples are beginnin' to git red,
It is pleasant to go whistlin' 'bout the farm, and fer to
hear

The breezes as they dance along an' whisper round
yer head.

An' then a little later, when the huskin's are the rage,
An' old-time apple parin's at the neighbors' houses
round,

I'm as happy as a little bird just let out from its cage,
An' my heart is makin' music out of ev'ry kind o'
sound.

An' in the winter evenin's, when the supper's cleared
away,

An' father's sittin' by the fire, his ole cob pipe a-light,
It's jus' the sweetest sound to me to hear my sister
say:

"John, don't you want to go with me to Sallie Baird's
to-night?"

Not that she's my sweet'art, though she's purty enough
to be,
Nor because I could n't love her as a sweet'art ort to do;
But jes' because she is so shy when I'm about, ye see,
An' looks at me as ef she thought, "I got no use fer
you."

Some nights she comes to our house—an', when it's
time to go,
She looks as ef she's most afraid to cross the fields
alone;
An' then I go back with her, an' we walk along as
slow,
An' every thing she says to me is in a' undertone.

An' then when I get home again, an' go up-stairs to
bed,
It's the longest kind o' time before I go to sleep at
all;
There's the queerest kind of idees allus runnin'
through my head,
An' Sallie Baird is somehow allus mixed up in 'em
all.

AN ELEGY.

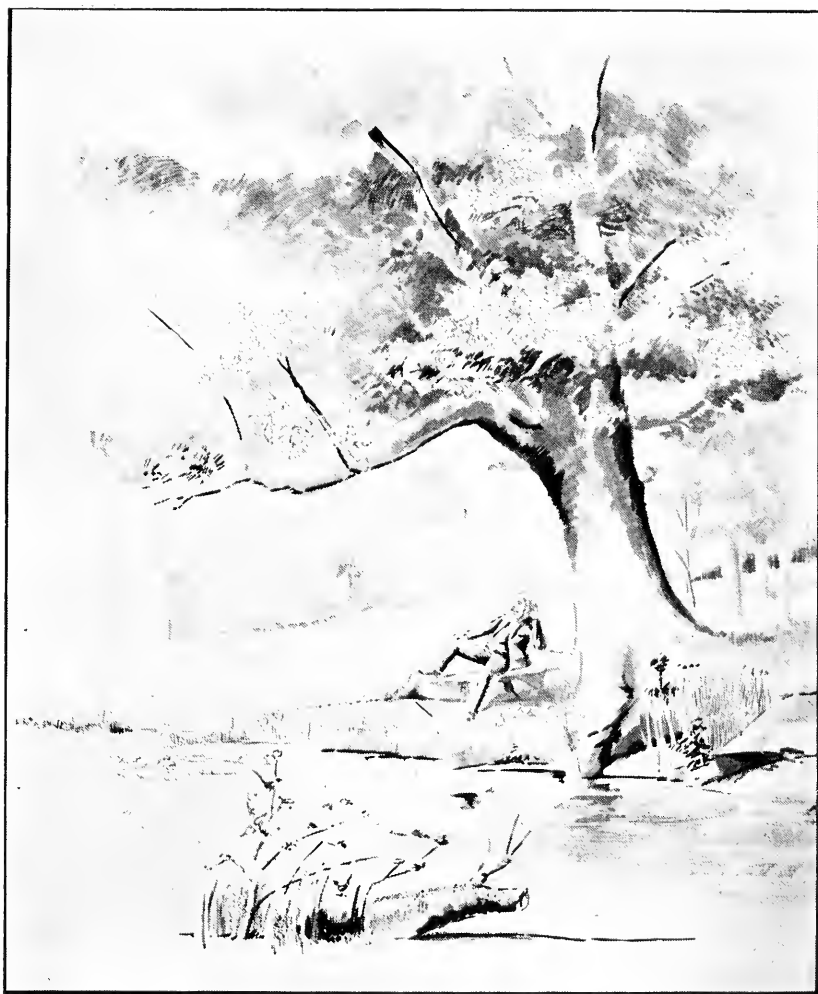
THE faultless hue of yon cerulean sky,
Wherein the mysteries of life are hid,
Allures me forth unto the woods where I
Def'nice awhile to care and toil may bid.

Aslant the interlacing boughs descends
The mellow radiance of the morning sun,
Which to the leaves translucent beauty lends,
And drinks the pendent dew-drops one by one.

Upon the rocks beneath this ancient tree,
Whose form is shadowed in the passing stream,
I'll sit me down awhile to rest—maybe
To meditate, perhaps to sleep and dream.

If speculation shall discern no trace
Of scenes enacted here upon a time,
Chide not, O man! if fancy should embrace
The present place for elegy and rhyme.

Who knows! erstwhile beneath this very tree,
Where I in silent musing sit to-day,
Some dusky warrior-poet it may be,
Traced the rude hieroglyphics of his lay.



“Upon the rocks beneath this ancient tree,
Whose form is shadowed in the passing stream,
I’ll sit me down awhile to rest—maybe
To meditate, perhaps to sleep and dream.”

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Perhaps he mourned some swarthy maiden fair,
Whom he had loved as only they can love
Who tread the wilds and breathe the mountain air,
And draw their inspiration from above.

Or it may be some chief of savage mien
Came here at morn his oracle to woo ;
Here sought his eagle-crested head to screen,
Or read the stars at night in yonder blue.

Perchance some red man's spirit parted here
With its rude tenement of earthly clay,
And bounded forth into that mystic sphere—
The happy hunting-grounds across the way.

Some dusky maiden may have here reclined
And dreamed such dreams as other maidens dream,
Her lover's image graven on her mind,
Her own reflected in this placid stream.

Again, it may have been the trysting place,
Where lovers met in the dim eventide,
Exchanged their vows—parting with fond embrace,
To seek their wigwams by the river side.

At hide and seek, doubtless, red men's children played
Where now the shadows fall about my feet ;

With pappoose on her back some squaw hath strayed
Down yonder path her tardy lord to meet,

Who, late returning from the weary chase,
Was wont to drop his burden in her arms,
And follow slowly to their resting-place,
Where even savage firesides have their charms.

But now no sign remains of all the past,
And fancy seeks in vain to lift the veil
And peer beneath the shadows time hath cast
Across the path where all traditions fail.

So, what hath been will be again no more ;
The dusky maid will here no more recline,
Nor poet trace his hieroglyphics as of yore,
Nor lovers here at eventide repine.

DREAM LAND.

NO music so sweet as that of our dreams,
No faces so fair as faces thus seen ;
No rivers so clear as the dream-land streams,
No flowers so fair, no foliage so green.

No shade like the shade of the dream-land trees,
No springs elsewhere so clear and cold;
No zephyr so mild as the dream-land breeze,
No turf to the tread like the dream-land mold.

No hills so high as the dream-land hills,
No beasts roam wild in the dream-land woods;
No pebbles so white as in dream-land rills,
No silence like the dream-land solitudes.

HEART MELODIES.

I CAN NOT sing the dear old songs
My heart forever sings;
To the dead past so much belongs,
So many dear, dead things,
Rest in the shadows of the years,
Each trembling note is lost in tears.
The by-ways of the past are filled
With wrecks and vanished faces,
And voices, forever stilled,
In unexpected places
Methinks I hear in the refrain,
Or mingling with the tender strain.

MY DEAD.

THERE is no life for me, since thy dear life
Passed through the shadows that fair autumn morn,
And I would fain give o'er the weary strife,
Since there can be to me no new hope born.

O Life! from which my life drew all its bliss!
O Soul! from which my soul obtained its light!
There is no agony to equal this—
This longing for thy tender words to-night.

It may be the departed never yearn
To clasp the dear ones left behind;
It may be in the change their spirits learn
These yearnings are alone to earth confined.

Yet I believe, if it were given thee
To know my loneliness, and leave were given,
Thou wouldst return awhile to comfort me,
And for my sake forego awhile of heaven.

But O! the pain, the agony when I
Remember, love, how vain these longings are
Which will not cease, however hard I try,
Thou dear beloved, my bright vanished star!

ANTON-LAR-REE.

(AN INDIAN LEGEND.)

IF my brother has not heard it,
Know the Red Man of the forest,
Besides the one Great Spirit, holds
A manito in all things dwells.
In each hill and every valley,
In each open glade and glen,
In each chamber of each cavern—
In every thing a spirit dwells.

And they like the Red Man only,
The white man they abominate.
Because he's always intruding,
Sweeping clean the earth, and robbing
It of stately trees, and tearing
Up the soil, and penetrating
Every sacred glen and cavern,
Killing beauty and polluting
Every limpid stream and fountain.

The Indian, he will not provoke them,
Conciliates, propitiates them ;
On the mountain top spreads for them,

Hangs on the crags or in the cave,
Or drops upon the flowing waters
Wreaths of flowers, belts of wampum,
Clusters of grapes and ears of maize.

And when an Indian child is given,
Be it a man-child or woman,
Then for it a spirit's chosen,
To protect it and to guide it,
And happy is its life or other,
As the guardian spirit's gifted,
Thus much ere my tale begins.

TETONTUAGA'S VISION.

Reposing was the Mengwe warrior,
In his lodge calmly reposing,
On the bank of his own river,
In the Moon of Luscious Berries,*
When, by the moonlight, in slanting,
He beheld in all his glory
A forest chief enter his cabin ;

Light his step was as the snow-fall,
And no word or sound he uttered,

* July.

But gazed on Tetontuaga ;
Who rose and from the wall his sin'wy
Bow took down, and from his quiver
Plucked a flawless, well-barbed arrow,
When lo ! away the phantom faded,
Like the mists of morning, faded.

Astonished, then, Tetontuaga
Woke his comrades from their slumber,
Woke and told them of the vision ;
But who naught had seen or hearkened.

Drawing then his robe around him,
He again repaired to slumber,
Closed his eyes and sought oblivion ;
Invoked the spirit which presideth
Over slumber to protect him
From disturbing dreams and visions.
But this blessing was denied him ;
For again the form gigantic,
And of dress of wond'rous texture,
Stood beside Tetontuaga.

Tall he was — of all men tallest ;
Black, but lusterless, his eyes were,
And larger than the moose's are,

Like a man almost o'erpow'rd
By the frost of the bleak Bear Moon,
Shook his great white teeth and chattered.
On his head a plume of feathers
Of some bird unknown wore he,
While a robe of ancient seeming,
Fastened with an eagle's talon,
Hung in ripples from his shoulders.
When he spoke his words were chilling,
Like the breath from frozen waters,
And marv'lous the things he told to
The amazed Tetontuaga:

Of the wars of the Al-le-ge-wi;*
Of blood that ran in mighty torrents
Into the Michigan and Erie,
And the river of the mountains,†
And the great Nae-me-si-Sip-u,‡
Discoloring their once clear waters—
Cresting with red foam their wild waves—
Till the men of the Al-le-ge-wi
From their hunting-grounds were driven,

* Evidently whom we call the Mound Builders.

† The Hudson.

‡ Mississippi.

(But where, none but the Great Master,
And the manitoes and spirits
In the Blessed Shades, knew whither),
By the Mengwe chief's ancestors,
Who hither came across the Frozen
Sea and smote the Al-le-ge-wi.

He then described the pigmy people,
Giant tribes and other races,
Who in the past, unknown ages
Thither dwelt and had their lodges.

Then a song, wild and discordant,
Like the croakings of the raven,
Burst, in tones loud and triumphant,
From his lips. Of valiant exploits
Of his tribe he sang and boasted,
Of his people long since perished,
Of their warfares, loves, and hatreds.
Changing then the theme, he sang him
Of the land of vanished spirits,
Where the souls of valiant red men
Still pursue the deer and bison.
Then recounted he traditions
And weird legends of times olden,

Of forest loves and strategies.
But at dawn the phantom vanished,
Whereon arose Tetontuaga,
And unto his tribe related
The traditions he had hearkened
Of the phantom in his cabin,
One of which I'll tell my brother.

THE LEGEND.

Brightly shone the moon, and sweetly
Chimed the voices of the waters
With the music of the rustling
Foliage on the swaying branches
Of the sighing forest linden,
When from out the tangled forest,
Breathing as from haste and hurry,
Came a youth and lovely maiden.

Tall he was, like the young pine tree,
Lithe and supple like the panther,
Fierce, when pitted with his foes he,
But compassionate and tender
With the maid he loved so dearly,
Gentle with her as a mother.

Beauteous she and small of stature,
Pure and radiant as the dew-drop,
Mild and gentle as the zephyr,
Of all mortal things the fairest.

The horse which had in safety borne them
From the maiden's lodge and people,
From her angry sire and brother,
Lay exhausted in the forest,
And now upon the river's margin,
With the twinkling stars above them,
And the moonlight streaming o'er them,
Paused they in suspense, and breathless.

Said the youth: " My Anton-Lar-ree,
We are safe, pursuit is vanquished ;
Like an arrow through the thicket
Sped our good steed through the forest ;
Foiled is thy angry father,
And my rival and thy brother ;
No angry voices, discordant,
Mar the stillness of the ev'ning ;
No mad footfalls sound behind us,
Safe are we, my Anton-Lar-ree.

So rest thee here, my beloved,
As a young bird, weary flying,
Rests upon the swaying branches
Till its faintness has departed.
To yon laurel copse I hasten,
Where concealed my canoe lieth;
Hither will I speed it quickly,
In it place my Anton-Lar-ree,
And the river to my tepee
We 'll descend, my fair Mekaia."

"O, leave me not?" the maiden pleaded,
"When thou leavest me I tremble,
And dismay my soul oppresses,
Quake I, then, with dire forebodings;
Hear I, then, my angry mother;
Storms my father like the tempest;
Shrieks my brother in his fury,
And thy rival, like the panther
Which accosts the lonely hunter,
Stands before thy Anton-Lar-ree,
Boasting of his deeds and valor,
All my lonely soul distressing;
Meet my name of Anton-Lar-ree,*

* Burnt Weed.

Since I am so like the limsy,
Drooping weed the fire has tortured."

"My Anton-Lar-ree, thou art dreaming,
No dread perils near thee hover ;
Let not fancy so mislead thee ;
Know thy Moscharr well would shield thee,
And his canoe soon will bear thee
To his lodge beyond the river,
Where his hated rival dare not,
And thy angry mother will not,
And thy storming father must not,
And thy raging brother shall not
Come to fright my wee Mekaia." *

Thus he said and lightly bounded
From her side and quickly vanished
Toward the laurels, where his canoe
Lay concealed beside the river.

At the moment he departed,
Passed a cloud before the moon's face,
All her radiance obscuring,
Deeming which an evil omen,
Shrank the maid among the willows,

* Their name for sweetheart.

All her slender form a-quiver
With the fear that came upon her.
But vain the presage was, and idle
Were her fears, for soon the cloud passed
And her lover stood beside her.

“ Cheer up, Mekaia ! here ’s thy Moscharr,
Haste, my love, and let ’s be going ;
I ’ve my canoe now in waiting,
And upon the placid river
Soon together we ’ll be drifting.”

To the canoe on the water
Quickly then her lover drew her ;
With her head upon his shoulder,
And his arm her waist encircling,
On the mid wave of the current
Shot the canoe, no hand guiding,
Sped the canoe down the river.

Swift as thought the current bore them,
Noting which the maiden queried :
“ Say, O Moscharr ! whither is it
Thou dost guide the canoe, prithee ?
Mark you not, love, how it speedeth

Toward the dread Oniagara?" *

"Nay, Mekaia," Moscharr answered,
"To yon strand the current's setting,
And our boat is drifting thither,
Where we 'll land, my Anton-Lar-ree."

Onward then and faster, faster,
Sped the canoe, swifter, swifter,
Toward the dread Oniagara.

"Tell me, Moscharr," now she urges,
"Tell me whither we are tending,
If not toward Oniagara?
See the blue-black curtain rising!
Hear the Cataract's deep thunder!
Mark the white foam madly frothing!
See the mists above us floating!
Feel the spray around us falling!
See! the shores are fast receding!
Hark! the thunder louder crashes!
O! the moon blood-red is turning,
For the mist is denser growing,
And the current's running swifter!
Surely that's Oniagara!"

* Niagara Falls.

“ Fair Ottawa, thou art dreaming,
(Oniagara is not near thee ;)
That you hear the surf is breaking
On the rocky shore, and yonder
Curtain is the forest looming
Where the river westward windeth ;
The mist above the river rising,
The Manito his pipe is smoking,
And the spray—the dew is falling,—
Cease, Mekaia, there 's no danger.”

“ But, my Moscharr, why this white foam
Dashing madly o'er the canoe?
Why this speed so like the whirlwind?
Why that white sheet upward rising,
Reeling, swaying in the moonlight,
Like the snow by whirlwinds lifted,
And those sounds mocking the thunders—
If 't is not Oniagara?
Lo ! to the land of spirits, Moscharr,
Tow'rd the seething whirlpool dash we !
Not Himself could the Great Master
Save us from Oniagara ! ”

“ Nay, Mekaia, though assisted
By the manitoes and spirits

Of all earth, He could not save us ;
Together in Oniagara
We shall sleep, my Anton-Lar-ree."

Heard the maid these words in silence,
Closer pressing to her Moscharr,
Quaking, clinging to her Moscharr.

But hark ! deluded maiden, hearken !
Who is *that* upon the shore there ?
Is not *that* thy lover calling :
"Anton-Lar-ree ! Anton-Lar-ree !"
Was not that *his* tone and accent ?
Was not that *his* "Anton-Lar-ree ?"
See him waving from the beetling
Crag, and shouting, "Anton-Lar-ree !"
O, Mekaia ! that 's thy Moscharr !

With the wind's velocity
Down the river hastens he,
Hoping to recover thee
From the dreadful Manito
Of Oniagara,
Who took Moscharr's form and guise,
Speech and dress, and otherwise

Demeaned himself like Moscharr,
That he might deceive and bear
Thee unto his cavern there
Beneath Oniagara.

One fond glance toward her lover
(Ere by consciousness deserted),
And the canoe madly bounded
O'er the crest of Oniagara.

If my brother does not know it,
I will tell him of a creature
Scarcely larger than a sparrow.
'T is a bird of wond'rous beauty ;
Green its neck, its wings are scarlet,
Long its tail — of rainbow colors,—
Wakon Bird, the Indians call it.
Often, when an Indian sorrows,
Comes this bird to sooth and cheer him ;
And scarce had the canoe vanished,
Ere the sorrowing Moscharr spied it
Far above him, slowly circling,
Circling slowly, and descending
To the spot where he was standing.
Circling thrice around his head, it

Poised above the stricken lover,
And began a song of promise.
Sweet and clear the notes it uttered,
Clear, but softer than the zephyr's
Sigh among the cedar branches.
Dropping lower, then, it fluttered
On before the sorrow-stricken
Youth toward the dark abysses,
Whence had vanished Anton-Lar-ree.

O, dreadful sight! O, sounds terrific!
What so frightful as mad waters!
Wreathing, writhing, seething waters!
Reeling, rearing, rending waters!
Lashing, crashing, crushing waters!
Weeping, wailing, shrieking waters!
Fearful, frightful, O, the sight is!
And the sound's appalling, shocking,
And the earth seems reeling, rocking
Where the awe-struck lover stands.

Onward Moscharr gropes his way through
Mist and spray and inky darkness,
Over slippery stones and pitfalls;
Slimy, toppling rocks above him,

Winding labyrinths he threaded,
Through the mist and spray and darkness,
Till an op'ning led him into
A vast cavern, whose rich splendor
Dazzled and a moment held him.

Precious stones, of blinding brightness,
Flashed a thousand lights upon him,
Every color of the rainbow—
Gorgeous hues—reflected saw he.
Thus he stood entranced and dazzled,
Till the Wakon Bird, low chirping,
Circled o'er a form recumbent ;
On a downy couch of sable,
Fainting, lay lost Anton-Lar-ree,
While beside her, now no longer
Counterfeiting her own Moscharr,
Crouched the hideous Manito—
The Manito of Oniagara.

Crooked his body was and hairy ;
Coarse his locks and long and shaggy ;
Like the bison's, large his ears were ;
Green his eyes, like the frog-ponds are,
And thus he wooed the fair and helpless :

“Fair and lovely Anton-Lar-ree,
The spirit of Oniagara
Seeks thy love—wilt thou not yield it?
If thou dost, he in return will
Ravish earth and air for treasure
To bestow on Anton-Lar-ree,
And to please thee, O Mekaia!
He this form of hideous seeming
Will discard and take thy lover’s.
But if thou his suit refuse him,
When to thee again he cometh,
Then in *this* form he ’ll enforce it,
And, once gratified his wishes,
He will cast thee to the torrent.”
With which plea and threat he vanished.

Seize! O seize! ye woful lovers,
Seize ye this propitious moment!
See! the Wakon Bird would lead thee!
Heed the mute appeal and hasten!
The mute design they see and heed it;
Swiftly from the cavern fly they,
And though dark the way and fearful,
Peril lends them strength and courage
To attempt the dreadful passage.

Midway of the steep ascend they,
Ere the Spirit misses—seeks them ;
See! his sin'wy limbs he 's straining
In his rage to overtake them !
Haste ! brave Moscharr, haste, I warn thee !
Haste ! the Manito gains on thee !
In thy arms the maiden quickly
Take and scale the heights, I beg thee !
Grasp the shrubs, and loose the bowlders
With thy feet, and send them crashing
On the Manito, and hurl him
To the seething depths below thee !
Summon, Moscharr, all thy fleetness !
Hasten ! hasten ! near the goal is,
Where a score of spirits wait thee,
Friends of thine, but deadly foes they
To the fiend who doth pursue thee.

With the maiden on his arm, he
Yet unyielding onward presses,
But the fiend is almost on him ;
Gloating, he his hand outstretches,
When, with one last effort, Moscharr
Forward leaps and falls exhausted ;
Whereon the Manito, exulting,



“Whereon the Manito, exulting,
Forward bends to grasp his victims.”

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Forward bends to grasp his victims ;
One hand on the maiden lays he,
With the other grasps he Moscharr ;
But his fiendish exultation
Hasty was, and vain as hasty,
For a sudden wrench of Moscharr's
Drew the Spirit, all unwitting,
O'er the limit of his kingdom,
Where a multitude ethereal
Ready were to seize and bind him.

" Oh, he is ours ! " in triumph sang they,
" Anton-Lar-ree's loathsome captor !
The Manito of Oniagara !
Oh, he is ours ! he is ours !
Let us bind with thongs of raw-hide,
Firmly bind, and beat and flay him ! "

Thus in triumph sang and did they,
Pricked his flesh, and tore and flayed him,
Then into the whirlpool tossed him,
Where his mangled form went sweeping
Round and round it to destruction.

Thus the chief, Tetontuaga,
Told the tale of Anton-Lar-ree.

THE AGED TRAMP.

I FOUND beside an old gravestone
Some stanzas soiled and wrinkled ;
The writer left his name unknown,
Each page with tear-marks sprinkled.
Below I give them without change,
The writer's lowly spirit
No doubt accounts for lack of range.
Judge ye as to their merit.

THE STANZAS.

“ Seek not to ascertain, I pray,
Whose hand these lines indited ;
Suffice to know his hairs are gray,
His fondest hopes were blighted.
“ Enough to know he never stays
One place beyond the morrow ;
Across the world he ever strays,
Accompanied by Sorrow.
“ Enough to know his heart, once warm,
Is now both cold and lonely,
And that his soul enshrines one form,
And mirrors one face only.

- “ Suffice to know that once had he
 No memories behind him,
No ties ahead, that he could see,
 To a dead past to bind him,
- “ From which he seeks in vain to draw
 The solace fate denies him,
Who, knowing, violates that law,
 Observing, sanctifies him.
- “ Enough that once his fancy glowed
 With dreams of admiration ;
And for a time his barque it rode
 The waves of emulation.
- “ He sought in knowledge for renown
 (That gift of erudition),
And thrust aside the golden crown
 Love tendered, for ambition.
- “ Enough, he bartered love for fame
 (That chimera most hoary),
Responsive to his longings came
 No single sound of glory.
- “ Not aimlessly he wandered here,
 By idle fancies driven ;

Her hand here, in a bygone year,
To him in troth was given.

(" Do not deride the humble tear,
Dropped here in sore contrition,
Nor pity him who boweth here,
Though piteous his condition.)

" Her grave, unkept by loving care,
The lapse of time is showing ;
Where roses should be blooming fair
Are bramble bushes growing,

" Which, locked and interlaced with vines,
Now screen from observation
The crumbling stone which here reclines,
Time's saddest visitation.

" 'T were sacrilegious, now, to touch
The ruin Time's perfected :
The vines and brambles, they are such
As grow on graves neglected.

" And lest his sorrow should disclose
His presence, and subject him
To the curious gaze of those
Who might, perchance, suspect him,

“ He ’ll go his way, unseen, unsought,
Nor leave one trace disclosing
His name, who came to view the spot
Where his dear dead ’s reposing.

“ But where? The foxes have their holes,
The birds their place of nesting,
The fish their beds upon the shoals,
But he’s no place of resting.

“ Why not go rest beside her grave,
Just for to-night, and borrow
From slumber strength enough to brave
The trials of the morrow?

“ Who knows? her spirit might descend
And bring me rest forever,
For angels sometimes do attend
Where souls and bodies sever.

“ I am so weary, and my grief
And age are sore distressing,
And sleep, maybe, will bring relief,
And dreams, perchance, a blessing.”

I read the lines, and then perused
Some epitaphs demurely ;

THE AGED TRAMP.

His life it is most sad, I mused,
Grief-pent his heart is, surely.

And musing thus I wandered through
The churchyard, pausing only
When I reached a grave I knew
Must be that one most lonely.

And then I started back in awe,
Beneath the brambles lying,
The aged form of one I saw,
One either dead or dying.

It was the tramp, whose story told
In verse with pity thrilled me;
I touched his brow, 't was dank and cold,
His clammy hands they chilled me.

We made his grave beside her there,
Sweet charity bestowing,
And now we tend with loving care
The roses round them growing.

PANORAMA FROM THE PINNACLE.

(CUMBERLAND GAP.)

YE towering peaks! wherefrom a thousand hills
are seen,

Undulating as the billows of a sea
(Mellowed and softened by the mists that lie between),
Would my horizon was as thine to thee,
Circling far away as mortal eye can reach,
Teaching Omnipotence as nothing else can teach.

Clearly outlined against a sky of mellow blue,
Each crag and peak seems nearer to the eye,
While Distance, fair enchantress, lends to the view
A border from her own soft-tinted sky;
Well might an artist doubt his own, and still
Ambition's voice, while gazing on Jehovah's skill.

The blending tints of mountain, mist, and dale,
The jutting crags, which rend at intervals the purple haze;
The sparkling streams, that thread the narrow vale,
The thousand hues that glorify the autumn days,
Challenge every sense of grandeur and defy
Man to imitate the inimitable Deity.

DESERTED.

DOETH never a thought of the past
Come over thy heart, dear one?
Doth memory never cast
An image at thy feet,
As you sit at night by the firelight
When the work of the day is done?

Doth never a girlish form
With hair of golden brown
Press thy cheeks with kisses warm,
Or pleadingly kneel at thy feet?—
Unlike the bride who, in her pride,
Knelt to receive her crown

Of purest love and devotion,
Thine every act foretold.
But now, alas! the ocean
Of mistrust rolls between
This heart of mine and that of thine—
Thy heart so stern and cold.

But thy love is dead, and sorrow
Like a mantle covereth me ;
I look no more to the morrow
For thy coming and a kiss ;
Hope hath fled, and all is dead,
Except my love for thee.

EVOLUTION.

WHAT are we? whence came we? and whitherto
tending?

Sages have answered all queries beside ;
Philosophy sophistry ever is lending,
And Science in vain the solution hath tried.

Was there a Beginning? will time have an end?

And Time—is it not of Eternity part?

And Death—is it not what we each of us lend

To Nature to give a new being a start?

And Life—what is life but a quantity given

By that Unknown Something no mortal hath seen,
Which from change unto change through eternity's
driven,

To return in the end to that Something again?

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

I AM not old, as they reckon age,
But there are things that double our years,
And the Book of Life has many a page
That is blurred and dimmed by tears.

It is such things that make things seem
So different from what they did
When Youth lay wrapt in a golden dream,
And the fruits of life lay hid.

I do not think it were right to say
That the bitterest cup is ours,
That we have gathered the thorns alway,
While others have plucked the flowers ;

For I believe that to every one
A dower of sorrow is given,
The better to finish the race begun
And gain a jointure of heaven.

I am not weary of earth, nor see
Death, instead of life, alway ;
These walk on either side of me,
Who am as Dusk 'twixt Night and Day.

And as each tree doth always cast
A shadow on three sides, I know
That every heart must own at last
Three fourths of life are shaded so.

My gloomy thoughts they are to me
As the ev'ning shadows are to earth,
Or cloud-shades to a sun-parched lea,
When it is perishing of dearth.

JOYS OF CHILDHOOD.

TO that dear land of story books,
O'er sunny meads and babbling brooks,
Where happy childhood plays its part,
And where is found no breaking heart,
I often turn, because I find
Rest and solace for the mind.

O! happy days of childhood, where
No order is, no worries are,
Where autocratic ways prevail,
And each his neighbor may assail
Without the penalty of wrong,
And prosper as the days go long.

HEART ECHOES.

BIRDIES of my heart, I'm weary,
Weary of the songs ye sing;
To a heart that 's always dreary,
They but more of sadness bring.

For ye sing of the departed,
Of the vanished ones for aye,
And I listen, weary hearted,
To the mournful things ye say.

From the treasured past ye bring me
Voice-echoes I remember,
And they chill my heart and sting me
Like the blasts of bleak December;

For the raven's beak, remorse, is
Ever tearing at my heart,
And thy song, O birdies, worse is
Than the archer's poisoned dart.

If ye would reproach or chide me
For some cruel word or wrong,
Then, perchance, I might abide ye
And thy sad, engrossing song.

Cease thy music for a season,
Let my heart lie down in peace,
For O! I am so sad by reason
Of thy songs—which never cease!

PARADOXES.

SOME hearts turn to the past and smile,
While some hearts turn and weep,
And count the time such a weary while
Since some one fell asleep.

Some feet move in the dance's maze,
To the sound of music quick or slow,
And some feet walk in the lonely ways
Where the dead were wont to go.

Some hands weave a bridal wreath,
Some play a funeral march,
Some hands fashion the cross of death,
And some the nuptial arch.

And so they move on, side by side,
These two extremes do, weal and woe,
And we could not part them, though we tried,
They are the sum of life, you know.

TREASURED TRINKETS.

LAST night I knelt beside a little heap
Of trinkets on the parlor floor,
Things which a grateful heart is wont to keep—
The little gifts of friends in days of yore.

If asked, you'd reckon them of little worth,
And pity one, no doubt, who treasured such;
Yet all the glittering wealth of earth
Could not buy them, I treasure them so much.
Their worth lies in the fact that they were hers—
(My dead wife's) some of them from childhood's years.

A saucer quaint, a fractured sun-flower bowl,
A refugee in gratitude had given;
A card of merit, won when first her soul
Began to try to solve the way to heaven;
A broken doll's head, and a tiny vase,
A bow of ribbon and some bits of lace.

These were the gifts of childhood, and I knew
That none were held more sacredly than they,
And in my heart I promised, as I drew
From out the heap a little, ragged spray

Of fern-leaf, given her by me one day,
That I would keep and cherish them alway.

My hand then, as if spirit-guided, sought
A little bunch of faded flowers there,
When memory, awakened mem'ry, caught
My bleeding heart and laid its sorrows bare ;
Remembering how sacredly these were kept,
I pressed them to my quivering lips and wept.

OCTOBER.

WHEN ye discern the scarlet-tinted leaves
Descending from the drooping maple bough,
And note the purple haze which deftly weaves
A veil upon the distant mountain's brow,
It is the time when mother Nature grieves,
For one by one her weanlings leave her now.
Nature presages every season's change,
And this the sign that Autumn is at hand—
The mists that drift along the mountain range,
The solemn stillness that pervades the land,
A melancholy feeling, sweet and strange,
Dreams born of sadness we can't understand.

AMBITION'S CURSE.

MIDST the gray streaks of childhood's early dawn
I catch a glimpse of childish innocence,
Backward to which unconsciously I'm drawn
By paths that reek with sweetest redolence.

Ah me! how 'neath ambition's ruthless tread
We crush the sweeter buds of early years,
Nor miss their fragrance till, withered and dead,
They drift out on the tide of rue and tears.

It is not so with those who seek alone
Life's meager comforts, and eschew vain deeds,
Content to harvest of the little sown
A bare sufficiency for frugal needs.

In such the faith of childhood still abides,
And they are happy for the reason they
Know nothing of the ebb and flow of tides
That waste more worldly hearts from day to day,
And who thenceforth in desolation tread,
Disconsolate, the wreck-strewn shores of life,
Berating fate, or weeping for their dead,
And with their souls forevermore at strife.

Such is ambition balked; or, if attained,
It palls upon the heart and hateful grows;
And though achieved, therefore is nothing gained,
If innocence die first—experience shows.

MY DEAD.

POOR little hands! they are folded now,
Oh! how many times their loving touch
Has caressed and soothed my aching brow—
Poor little hands! there are no more such.

Poor pale lips! now so mute and still!
No unkind word fell from them ever,
Where they could not warm they would not chill,
Or could not bind, they would not sever.

Dear little heart! it is pulseless now;
How warmly it beat for others' woes,
How faithful it was to the lightest vow—
Only the heart of another knows.

Dear little feet! they were weary when
The angel came for her, but they
Gladly answered the summons then—
Would they could answer mine to-day.

THE WIFE'S GRIEF.

THEY came to her gently, sadly and gently,
With that, evidently,
Would harrow her soul if its import were known;
They told her the scaffold, the treacherous scaffold
Had dropped with an awful,
A terrible crash to the pavement of stone.

They thought he was injured—or feared he was injured,
Her husband was injured—
Along with the other unfortunate men;
Yet they were hopeful, and she must be hopeful,
Courageous and hopeful;
And bearing a litter some came slowly then.

Oh! it was distressing—her grief was distressing,
And it was a blessing
She swooned ere the face of the dead she had bared;
Gently they lifted her, tenderly lifted her,
Mercif'ly shifted her
Thence to her room till the corpse was prepared.

Then she was admitted, with caution admitted,
And all of them pitied

The pale, fragile form kneeling there by the bier;
And they said of her sorrow, her piteous sorrow,
 "'T will be worse to-morrow,
And oh! what will become of those children and her!"

And she cried: "Oh! the hand, the great brawny hand,
 Which could so withstand
The onslaughts of man and the wolf at the door,
Lies pulseless and cold—both of them cold!
 On his bosom now fold,
To wield for and shield me again never more!"

And now as she kneels, by the rigid form kneels,
 How forceful she feels
The depth of the sorrow besieging her heart,
And oh! how she weeps, how bitterly she weeps,
 As closer she creeps
To that which of earth is now only a part.

And as they endeavor—in kindness endeavor
 Her arms to dissever
From the form she's convulsively clinging to now,
She pleads in a foment—a passionate foment
 Of grief for one moment,
Till she kisses again and again the pale brow.

RETROSPECTIONS OF AGE.

WHO lingers longest by the way,
And counts his winters by the score,
Sees not the ev'ning shadows play
About his feet, nor hears the roar
Of sullen waters just before.

Heeds not the drifting twilight stray
Beneath the cypress o'er the tomb,
Nor marks the waning of the day,
For watching early flowers bloom,
Till all is lost in utter gloom.

So near the sacred past he bides,
Age loses its allotted ills,
While memory, still buoyant, glides
Backward and forth across the hills,
Through scenes which all his being thrills.

The dreams of youth before him lie,
Or in procession pass before
The vision of his paling eye,
So that he sees them as of yore,
Cinctured with tints which erst they wore.

THE SAILOR AND CHILD.

'T IS cheerless and cold, and the winds all day
Have kept the limbs on the trees a-quiver,
And the waves are wild on the ruffled bay,
And cold and dark is the river ;
Shud'ring, I turn from the window away,
" 'T is a bleak, wild night "—I shiver.

My room 's a-glow with a cheerful fire,
" 'T is pleasant in here, at least," I muse,
And while the angry winds rise higher,
I think of the ships gone out, whose crews
Risk their lives on the sea for hire ;
'T is a dangerous life they choose.

Meanwhile the angry winds go shrieking by,
And the snowflakes drift on the window sill ;
I shiver and stir the fire and sigh,
As I think of the lone hut on the hill—
Of the sailor's child they say will die,
And I wonder if he will.

All day he scanned from his little cot
The distant horizon of the sea,

Murm'ring, "I wouldn't mind if I thought
Dear papa would get back to thee,
For yours would be such a lonely lot,
With neither father nor me."

I turn and walk to the window again,
And gaze on the terrible storm outside,
Somehow my heart is filled with pain,
As if some near, dear friend had died;
"'T is a fearful feeling," I complain,
"I'll go out and watch the raging tide.

"Perhaps some ship-wrecked sailor may
Be driven ashore by the storm to-night,
And so I'll don my cloak, I say,
And walk the beach with lantern-light;
Maybe the gleam of its restless ray
Will guide some hapless vessel right."

The sea is wild, and the waves run high,
Where the white-caps leap and chase each other,
"No ship can live in this," muse I,
"'T is fearful, fearful weather!
Hark! surely, surely that's a cry!
Ah, yes! and there's another!"

I scan the shore where my lantern throws
A feeble light on the shifting sand,
And my feeling, I know, none but those
Who've caught the gleam of a drowning hand—
As it parts the waves and a moment shows—
Only such can understand.

I place my light where its feeble ray
Will skim the crest of the frothing wave,
And then dash through the blinding spray,
It may be to a watery grave;
" 'Tis a fearful risk, I know," I say,
" I'll risk it, though, a life to save."

I am drenched and strangled by the brine
Ere I get my burden out to land;
For a corpse, not a life, have I risked mine,
I think as I lay him on the sand.
" O, a fearful death, poor man, was thine!"
I say as I vainly chafe his hand.

And then there comes to mine eye a tear,
And I think of the lonely hut once more,
For this, I see, is the sailor here,
The dead man I am bending o'er;

“ So near his home—his loved so near,”
I say, as I turn to leave the shore.

So one lies dead on the little cot,
And one lies here on the sands by the sea;
O! a sorrowful life and a lonely lot
Must that of the childless widow be!

VISIONS.

O H! forms of beauty, which adorn our dreams,
Oh! mystic sounds of music, sweet and rare,
How unattainable, which ever seems
So near, O thou more subtile things than air!

Why is it so—why is the poet given
Glimpses of things no mortal can portray?
Why are these sounds across his senses driven
To linger for a while and pass away?

And why those forms evanish while his hands
In rapturous longing are stretched out to them?
Than which 't were easier to count the ocean's sands
Than 't were to touch their garment's hem.

But so it is—the poet's dream is vain ;
He may see, but may not paint these faces ;
May hear, but may not sound one single strain
Seen and heard in Fancy's mystic places.

THE FLOWER GIRL.

I MET a coy maiden,
When the summer sun was set,
Her arms with flowers laden,
Her tresses dewy wet,
Her garments hung about her
Like a statue's drapery, showing
A form she did n't doubt her
Would set love's darts a-going.

"O maiden! I adore thee,
All other maids beside,
Tell me, I implore thee,
If thou wilt be my bride?
Modest was her answer
As the daisies in her hand,
"I love another man, sir,
I'd have thee understand."

MAY DAYS.

O COME with me, if thou wouldst find
A charm to thrill each sense,
And thoughts to soothe thy heart and mind,
And banish care's suspense.

Down where the water lilies grow,
And happy bluebirds sing,
I'll carry thee, and as we go
Thou 'lt feel a new hope spring.

To-day the harp of Nature's strung,
And every chord is fraught
With a melody the young
And tender flowers brought.

And if thine ear is in a-tune
With nature, and thy heart
Is open to receive the boon,
The blessing she'll impart.

And from the saucy, truant breeze
We'll snatch the redolence
It purloins from the budding trees,
Nor censure its offense.

Dew-diademed and honey-sprent,
Each pink and purple flower
Beneath marauding bee is bent,
In coppice, cove, and bower.

The songsters riot in their glee,
And flit from twig to twig ;
The squirrel leaps from tree to tree
And barks, the little prig !

The insect thrums his violin,
The picus taps his drum,
The water-bugs in eddies spin
Amid the shadows' gloom.

Let's pause by this embowered shrine ;
Fit place it is to muse,
Fit place to render the divine,
Benignant One His dues.

Let's thank Him for the warmth and dew
That nourishes the flower,
Which pleasures me and gladdens you
This blessed May-morn hour,
And for the fragrance that imbues
The lucid atmosphere,
And then in silence we can muse
Beneath the foliage here.

A FACE.

A MEMORY, lost in the rush of things
That comes to us all some time,
Comes back to my heart to-night and brings
A face of the southern clime,—
A face seen there in the long ago,
In the twilight hush, the after-glow
Of a beautiful day in June.

And the veil is rent which the lapse of years
Had woven over the past,
And the tide turns back, and youth appears,
In a golden halo cast ;
And gazing backward wistfully,
In sad, regretful tones I cry :
“ Oh ! why did it pass so soon ! ”

And a voice hesitant, low and sweet,
In answer to my own,
Seems for the moment again to greet
Me with its loving tone ;
And lest the scene, thus conjured, fade,
I close my eyes and try to persuade
Myself that it is no dream.

O, youth ! with its love-pent heart and sighs !

O, age ! with its rue and tears !

From the one to the other backward flies

My soul across the years !

I feel the touch of lips to mine,

And catch the glance of eyes that shine

On me with a love-lit beam.

Yea, I feel the touch of a soft caress

Upon my aching brow,

And glimpse the glint of a golden tress,

Till it all seems, somehow,

My dead love had come back to me,

To soothe my heart as only she

Could soothe it, or make seem.

AN ILLUSION.

THE organ sounded the wedding march,

As we passed up the aisle together,

My bride that was to be and I,

And stood beneath the nuptial arch,

Where in the years gone by another

I'd sworn to love till one should die.

And something, I think, in the organ's tone,
Or it may be the small gloved hand,
Which lay in a trustful way in mine,
Caused me to think of that first one,
Who seemed for the time again to stand
Beside me there, while the aged divine

Was saying the marriage service o'er.
Yes, she was there ; it was her, I know,
For I felt her warm breath on my cheek,
And she wore the same gauze-gown she wore
When we stood there long years ago,
The same hour and day of the week.

The rose in her hair was the same she wore
As we stood there together then,
And the flush on her cheek was the same ;
And the pink-white buds in her hand she bore
Gave out the same sweet fragrance again,
And I even recalled their name.

I was not faithless—I will not own
I loved this woman less, that she
Faded away when the other came,
And left my first love and I alone,

Or that 't was my fault she came to me,—
'T was the place and the hour to blame!

Not till the rite was over did she
Leave my side and the other come,
Whose hand on my arm I felt, and knew
It was my wife, as together we
Turned about and left the room—
Henceforth one in all, we two.

AUTUMN MISTS.

THE mist spirits, trailing their gossamer veils,
Are flitting across the mountains and dales,
Hitherward, thitherward, to and fro,
Whisking the leaves from the trees they go;
Tinting the vales a purple hue,
And the distant hills a hazy blue.

Crimson and scarlet, purple and gold,
They gather and strew from their garments' fold,
Till the leaves on the trees all colors display,
Marking the path where the mist spirits stray;
And over the crags of the frowning cliffs
They sprinkle a haze in the yawning rifts.

BITTER AND SWEET.

LAUGH in your mirth, and the echo
Sends back a questioning tone ;
For under each ripple of laughter
Trembles a grief-pent moan.

Sigh, and the heart that heaves it
May place on thy lips a smile ;
For under each sigh is lurking
A something to beguile.

Weep, and the grief that caused it
May in a twinkling go ;
For under each wave of sorrow
Is an antidote for woe.

Dance, and the feet that measure
The music's pulsing strain,
On the morrow may be keeping
Step in a funeral train.

For the heart, dual in nature,
Gives out both weal and woe,
And our life's both sweet and bitter—
And it is better so.

MY LADY'S ROSE.

WHAT sweeter function hath the rose,
Than to grace my lady's breast?
Surely for her alone it grows,
Because she loves it best.

I've watched it on her bosom rise
And fall with every breath,
And tried to read in her dear eyes
The heart that lay beneath ;

But all in vain ! she only smiles,
And bends upon the rose
A tender glance, and by her wiles
Refuses to disclose

What feelings lie beneath it there,
Though well, indeed, she knows
That I would give my life to share
The glance she gives the rose.

Yet I'm not jealous of the rose ;
In fact, I love it best
Of every tender bud that grows—
The rose upon her breast.

SEA-STORM TRAGEDY.

THE night is dark and dreary,
And the sky is overcast
With low clouds and dark mists
That run before the blast—
The strong winds, the mad winds
That come across the sea,
And no one to man the boat
But only John and me,—
The light boat, the frail boat—
The boat before the gale !

I am at the tiller-wheel,
John is reefing sail,
And neither of us says a word,
Though both, intent and pale,
Hearken to the drear sounds
And watch the levin play
And gambol 'round the frail boat,
Groaning through the spray,—
The sick boat, the doomed boat,
The boat with tattered sail !

Fiercer grows the wind's tone,
Faster plays the levin,
The mists fly, the clouds drop,
And darker grows the heaven ;
John is peering through the spray,
I the tiller turning,
Neither saying any thing,
Only hoping, yearning,
When a wave, a strong wave
Leaps across the deck there !

The rain stops, the winds cease,
The clouds they disappear ;
A full moon, a picaroon
Shows me hovering near !—
And also a clean deck,
A broken mast, and —John !—
I furl sail, turn the wheel
And man the boat alone !
My heart's sad, I'm half mad !
John !—he is n't here !

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD.

MARK how yon tiny rays of light
The shifting shadows scatter,
And which, though thrown by the bright
Beams on the restless water,
Would fain deny those beams a place
The beauties of their light to trace.
Thus would the rays of truth break through
Dark falsehood's intricacies,
Effacing, as the sun's rays do
Leaf shadows, falsehood's traces;
For what is falsehood's to conceal
Is truth's pure mission to reveal.

THE SILENT MUSE.

THE sweetest songs the poet ever sings
Are not the ones indited by his pen;
They come to him on thought's swift, silent wings,
Their melody not heard by other men.
The songs he gives the sordid world and thee
Are but the dross from those his soul retains,
The jarring discords, which can never be
Strung in his soul with those harmonious strains.

THE STONE CANOE.

(AN INDIAN LEGEND.)

WOULD my brother hear a story
Of the Chippewayan heaven?
Of the stone canoe that's anchored
On the margin of the river,
By a rope of sand securely
To the shadow of a willow,
Ready there to carry over
Any Chippewayan's spirit
To the Happy Island lying
Just across the Judgment River?

In a region all but sunless,
And where snow's almost perpetual,
And the storms are fierce and lasting;
Where no ears of maize do ripen
To reward the women's toil,
And no flowers spring to gladden
Happy heart of youthful maiden,
The Chippewayans have their lodges.

Late their summers come, and tarry
But a little season, giving

Neither fruits nor luscious berries,
To remind them of their visits.
Chill their autumns are and dreary ;
Bleak their winters are, and bitter,
And no gentle breezes ever
Whisper through the short, misshapen
Branches of dwarf-pine and willow,
Gnarled and twisted by impetuous
Winds that keep them ever sighing,
Moaning, shivering, or crying
To the Master to relieve them
Of their heavy, snowy burden,
Of their weighty, icy armor.

Such the Chippewayan's summers,
Such the Chippewayan's autumns,
Such the Chippewayan's winters,
No spring hath the Chippewayan !
Verdureless their plains, and barren,
Motionless their brooks and rivers,
Manacled with icy shackles.

Yet the Chippewayan's happy ;
Sport and pastime hath he plenty ;
Round icebergs musk-oxen chasing ;

On the Bear Lake spearing salmon ;
Piercing eagles with his arrows,
Making the great white owl captive ;
Or in winter, when the hail is
Beating round his snow-sheathed cabin,
Stretched upon his bed of mosses,
He may then recount the glories
Of his father or his nation ;
Or take solace for privations
Forced upon his mortal body,
Dreaming of the white stone canoe
Waiting by the Judgment Waters
For the valiant Chippewayan,
When his spirit hath abandoned
Mortal clog and earthly matter.

In his lodge a Chippewayan
Sat beside his fire in winter,
And unto his wond'ring children
Told the story, or tradition
Of the Chippewayan heaven.

“On a time,” began the father,

“In the Chippewayan Nation,

Dwelt a fair and youthful maiden—

Of the wilderness the flower.
All the youthful hunters loved her,
But she favored none's advances,
Save the young brave, Outilissa ;
Only Outilissa whispered
Tales of love by her nocturnal
Couch, while dusky darkness covered
All the land and others slumbered ;
Only rock-moss by him gathered
Would she taste, because 't was sweetest,
And the produce of his prowess
In the chase was always tend'rest,
And the gifts he brought the fairest.

But it never was permitted
They two in one lodge should tarry—
On one couch repose together.
Death came to the lovely maiden
In the morning of her beauty—
Came and took the cherished flower,
And to rest they gently laid her
In the manner of their burial.

Gaily tinted feathers wove they
In a robe of comely seeming—

Wove and wrapped about her gently ;
Lined her grave with cedar branches,
And in sorrow laid her in it,
'Midst the sighs and lamentations
Of the tribe, both men and women ;
And, when the sad rites were over,
Turned they all and sought their lodges—
All of them, save Outilissa,
Who moved not, but stood, heart-broken,
Gazing on the new sepulcher,
Gazing on, but weeping never ;
Motionless he stood and rigid,
Frozen by his bitter sorrow.

Joy came not to him ever ;
In the chase no pleasure found he,
Nor the quest upon the river,
Spearing there the sportive salmon,
Since no smile of approbation
Met him when the chase was over—
Met him with soft words and blushes.

In the ears, then, of his people,
Told he of his will and purpose
To pursue and join the maiden,

Who'd but journeyed, so he reasoned,
To some brighter, happier region,
As the arctic bird flies southward,
And he knew he soon should find her.

Guided by the old traditions
Of his fathers and his nation,
Southward wended he his journey,
Leaving fields of snow eternal
And the Hunter's Star behind him.
And as thus he journeyed onward
Thinner grew the ice, and warmer
Blew the breezes from a region
Redolent of sweetest flowers.

Daily grew the change apparent;
Songsters, which he yet had never
Seen before, sang from the bushes,—
Flitted round his head, or hovered
In the branches, peering downward
Where he hastened on beneath them.

No more, now, icicles pendent
Hung from drooping boughs above him,
But instead the buds were bursting

On each little twig, and tiny
Little flowers, pink and purple,
Peered at him across the open
Spaces in the copse and dingle;
While ever, as he journeyed onward,
Milder seemed the skies and longer
Grew the days, and brighter, warmer
Shone the sun, with greater splendor;
Noting which his heart grew lighter,
Knowing he was getting nearer
To the maiden's habitation—
To the blessed, Happy Island,
Southward of the Judgment Waters.

At length an open space before him
Showed a cabin in the middle
Of the way by which he traveled,
In the door of which was standing
One of quaint and ancient seeming.
Bent he was with age, and snowy
Were the locks his head adorning;
Dim his shrunken eyes, but furtive;
Shriveled was his form, and wasted,
As by many moons of fasting;

Spotless white the robe of goat-skin
That adorned his drooping shoulders,
While a sturdy staff of maple
Was the trembling limbs supporting.

Timidly then Outilissa
Ventured near the aged being,
And, with some misgiving, told him
Why it was he 'd ventured thither.
But Che-bi-a-bus, replying,
Said he knew quite well the story :
“ Only yesterday the maiden
Passed this way,” he said, “ and rested
For awhile here in my cabin,
And if thou wilt hasten onward
It may be thou 'lt overtake her.
But thou canst not take thy body,
Nor thy dog and bow and arrows
Past the gate here of my dwelling.
Hence, if thou wouldst see the maiden,
Leave thy body, dog and weapons,
And my blessing shall go with thee,
And if good have been thy actions,
And thy deeds been deeds of daring,

And thy lodge pole well is laden
With the scalps of vanquished warriors,
Soon shalt thou behold the maiden
And unto thy bosom clasp her."

Not long, then, was Outilissa
Casting off the mortal body,
Which he left behind and started
Onward to the land of spirits.
Scarce two bow-shots had he journeyed
When he stood upon a mountain,
Sloping gently to a river
Fringed with trees and waving verdure.

Many canoes on the bosom
Of the river saw he gliding,
While, beyond, the Blissful Islands
Loomed a mass of floral beauty,
Clust'ring grapes and luscious berries,
Where the souls of Chippewayans
Danced and feasted and made merry.
Near a group of happy spirits,
Leaning on a bank of roses,
Rapt in blissful contemplation
Of the beauteous scene before her,

He beheld his own loved maiden !
O, the sight ! enrapturing vision !
To his feet it lent the fleetness
Of the antelope, and quickly
He is on the river's margin,
Where, anchored to a willow's shadow,
By a rope of sand securely
(Idly tugging at its moorings),
Lay a white stone canoe, ready
To convey him to the island,
Where, unconscious of his presence,
Basked the maiden he was seeking.
Springing in the canoe lightly,
He the rope of sand unfastened
From the shadow of the willow,
And then taking up the paddle,
He unto the waves committed
Now his soul for final judgment !—
Knowing as his deeds were noted,
So his soul must live or perish.

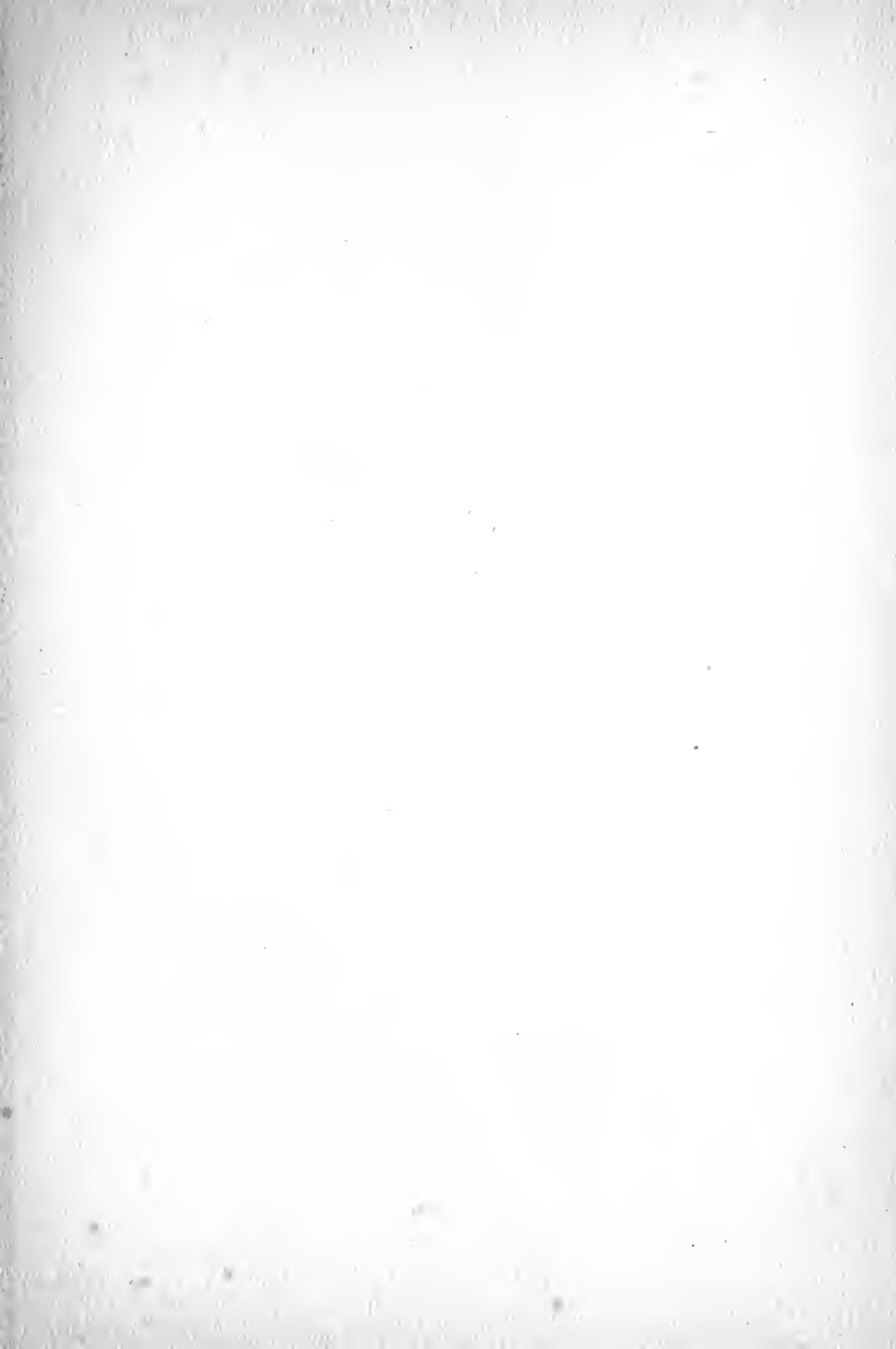
Who then could describe his rapture,
When he found the canoe gliding
Safely o'er the placid waters !

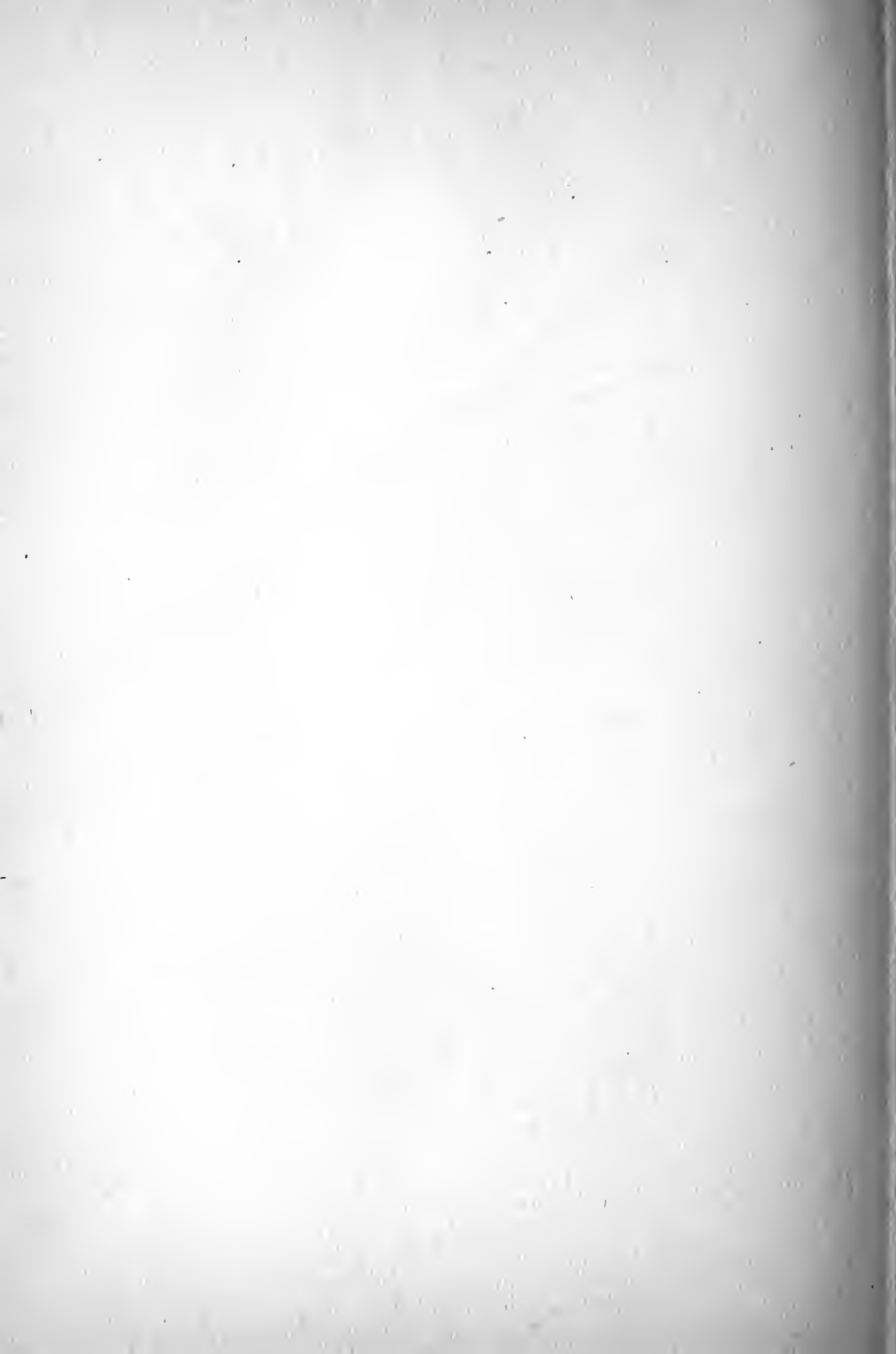
What though he had sometimes slaughtered
More musk-oxen than were needed?
Oft speared salmon to be eaten
By the ravenous brown eagle,
And sweet rock-moss often gathered,
But to see it rot and perish;
Or once mocked a priest, and trembled
At a Lenni Lenape's war-cry,
And a beaver's tongue neglected
Once to burn in recognition
Of the Master's love and kindness,
Sending it across his pathway
In a time of dearth and famine,—
Yet his good deeds were outweighing
All of these, and he was safely
Drifting tow'rd the Happy Island!

As he drifted thus, his eyes were
Ever pained by sights of horror,
And his ears by cries appalling.
Here and there a canoe saw he
Sink and draw its burden after;
A father, sometimes, while his children
Helpless watched him from the island;

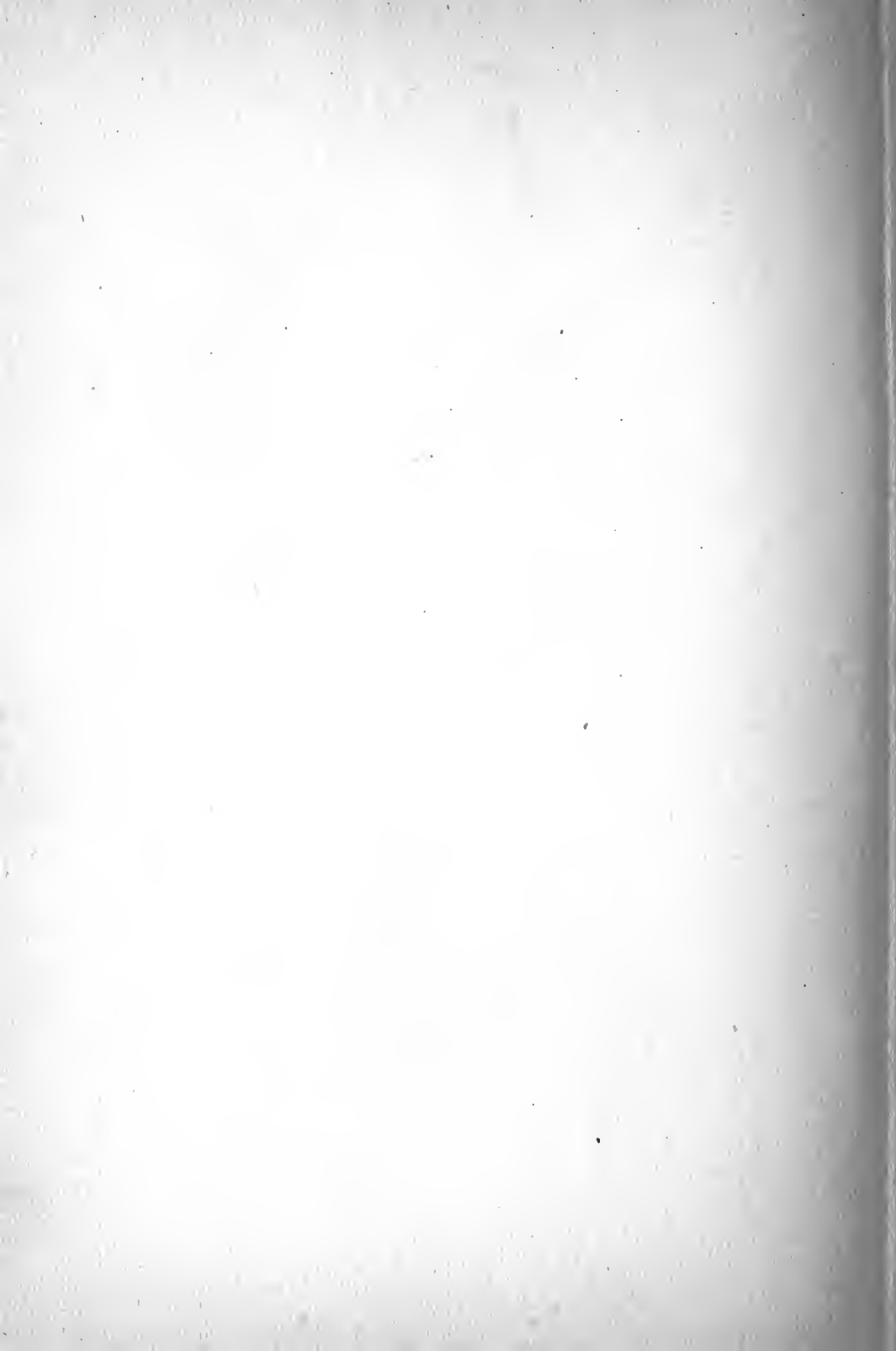
Or a youth, a wife, or mother
Sank with cries all unavailing,
While the loved ones watched and waited.

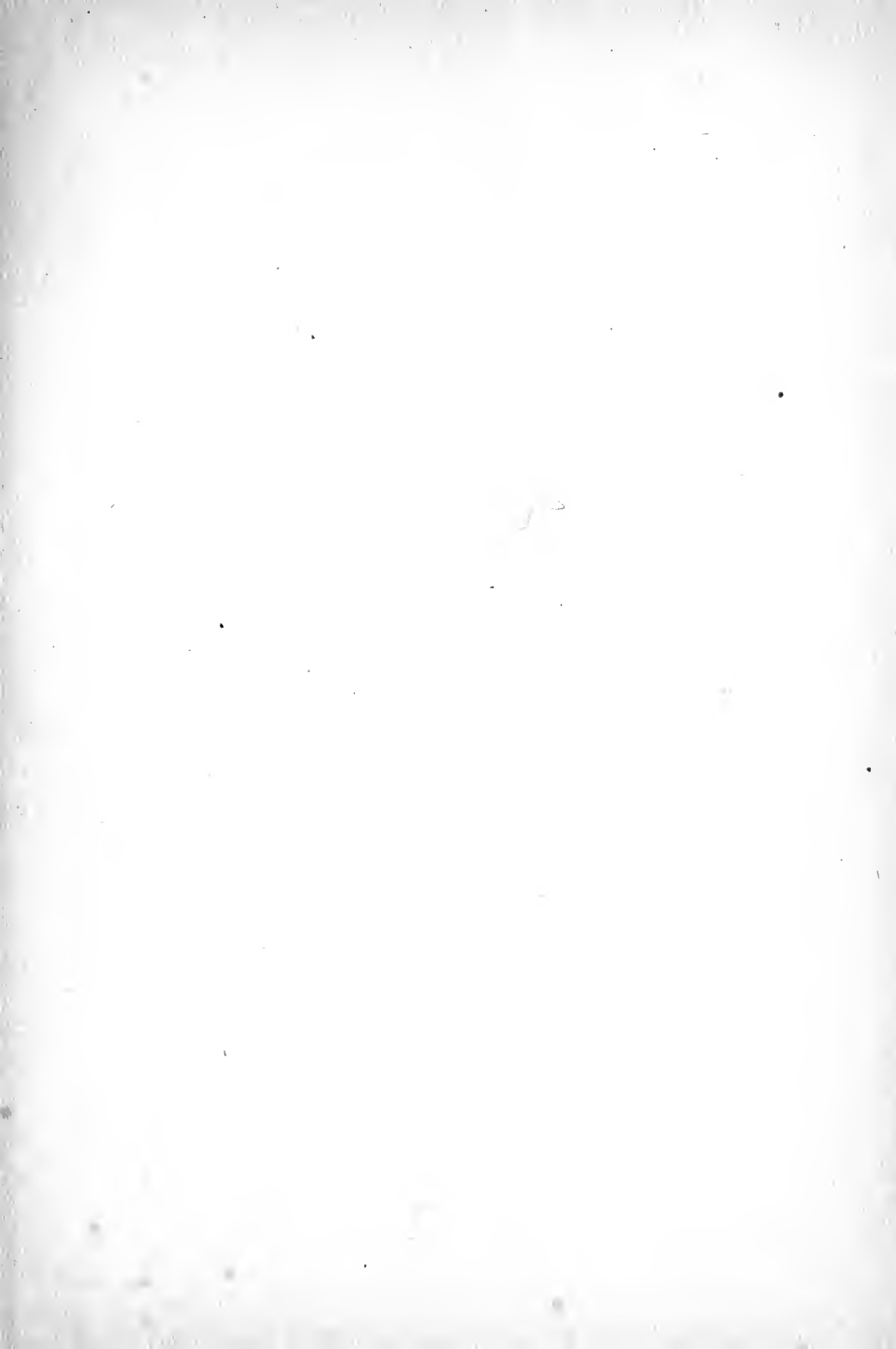
Soon the Happy Island gains he,
And, leaping quickly from the canoe,
Bounds with joy toward the maiden,
Who, on seeing, springs to meet him.
Oh, the soul-enrapturing sweetness !
Oh, the joy of that meeting !
Brother, it were worth the effort
To live better, that our souls may
Safely reach that happy region,
Where our loved ones watch and wait us,
In the Chippewayan heaven.

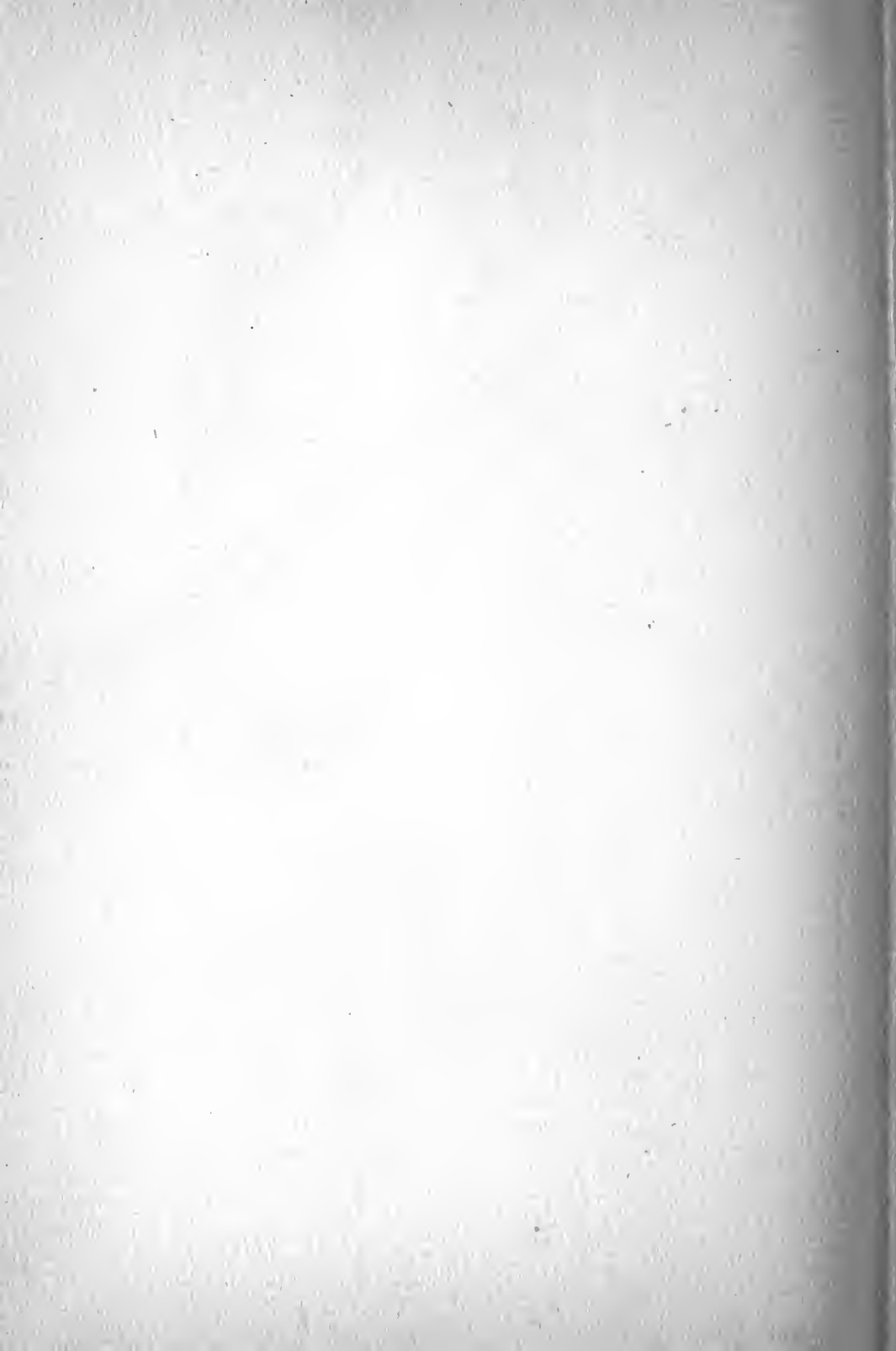














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